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THE ORIENT EXPRESS

Slick Willie's Budget-Deficit-Reduction Talking Blues

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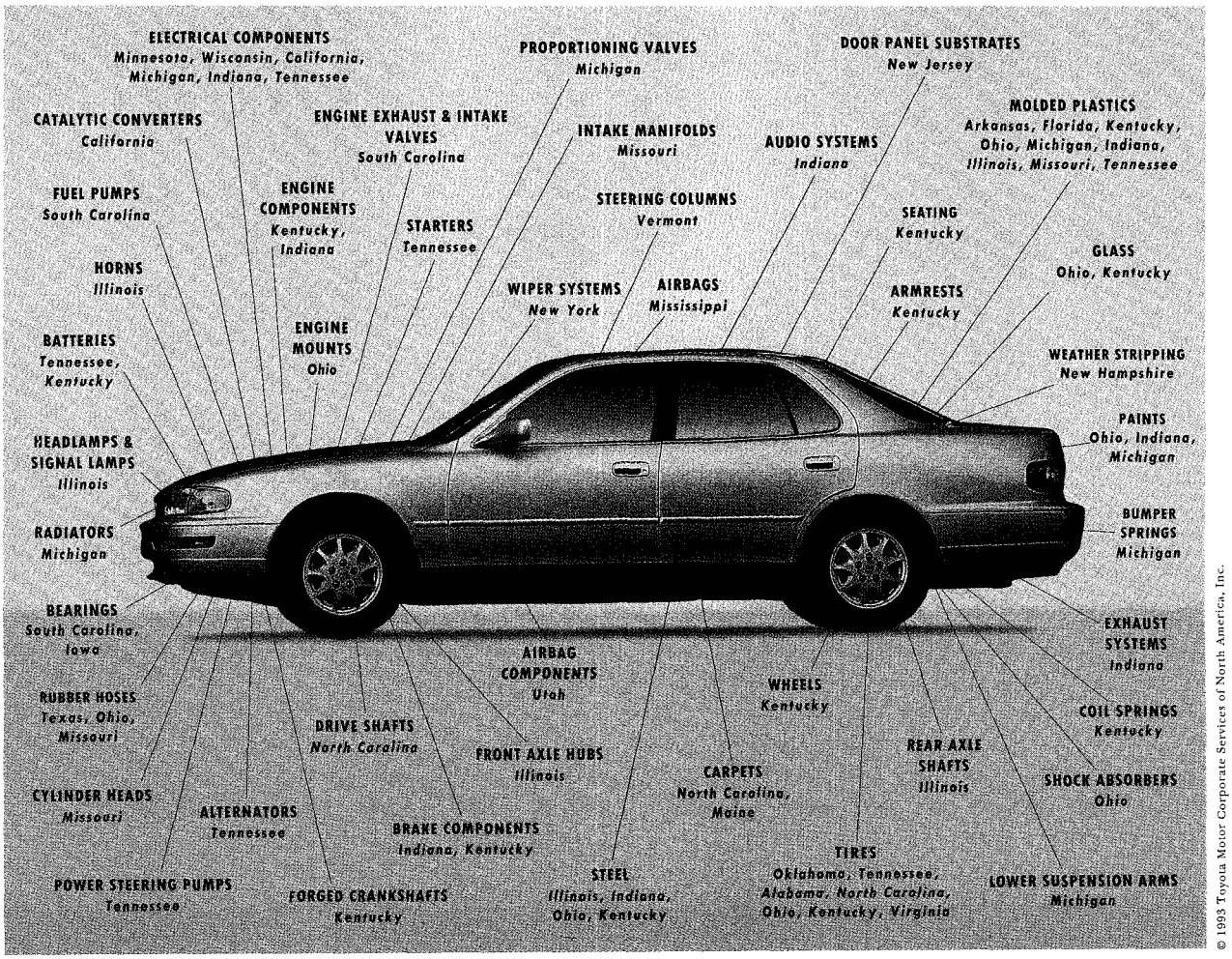

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NATIONAL REVIEW

MAY 10, 1993 VOL. XLV, NO. 9

Cover Story

23 ***Her Word against His***
The final word on the Anita Hill–Clarence Thomas dispute—that we can never know who was telling the truth—is wrong, says **David Brock**: one story is full of holes.

Articles

16 ***On the Scene***
Brit Hume explains why Bill Clinton loves to tax. . . . **William Murchison** does a round-up on Texas's hot U.S. Senate race. . . . **Vin Weber** gives the inside story on how the defense budget was saved—for now. . . . Hillary Clinton almost throwing the first pitch on Opening Day isn't the only sign that Chicago politics are entering a New Age, sighs **John R. Coyne Jr.**

27 ***No Time for Gimmicks***
John Attarian demonstrates that neither Mr. Clinton's tax increases nor some conservative countermeasures can stop the deficit from exploding. The problem isn't revenue or pork but the heart of the welfare state: entitlements.

33 ***The Cure that Failed***
Is AZT a treatment for AIDS or for AIDS-driven politics? **Tom Bethell** uncovers a few facts.

36 ***Where the Action Is***
Robert S. Elegant surveys the booming Orient and the causes of—and threats to—the Pacific Rim's prosperity. . . . **William McGurn** reports on the struggle to secure freedom for Hong Kong.

40 ***Who Killed SDI?***
Ten years after Ronald Reagan's Star Wars speech we still have no strategic defenses. **Angelo M. Codevilla** shows why.

44 ***Letter from Al***
The Veep reveals how he earned a great reward with a stellar hundred days.

Books, Arts & Manners

46 Did the Eighties teach us anything of conservatism's essence? **Kenneth Minogue** locates some answers in Shirley Robin Letwin's *The Anatomy of Thatcherism*. . . . **Bruce Frohnen** is glad to see liberalism moving beyond sterile rights theory in Amitai Etzioni's *The Spirit of Community*, but finds that, as far as knowing his enemies, Etzioni still has a long way to go. . . . *The Queen's Throat*, Wayne Koestenbaum's gay look at the opera, is marred and made by the author's self-indulgence, sighs **James Gardner**. . . . **John Simon**'s lessons of the week: *Point of No Return* and *Born Yesterday* prove that imitation needn't flatter, while *Falling Down* shows a new sort of excess. . . . How, asks **Linda Bridges**, would the Paris Opera Ballet's *La Bayadère* look if Nureyev had lived? . . . **Matthew Scully** concedes that animal rights are for the birds—but what are the birds for?

64 ***The Gimlet Eye***
Modern journalism, jeers **Andrew Ferguson**, can't even tell its own story straight.

Sections

2 ***Letters***
4 ***From the Editor***
6 ***For the Record***
8 ***The Week***
30 help
62 ***On the Right***

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LETTERS

The Gaying of the Military

While starting his article as the voice of sweet reason, E. L. Pattullo in "Why Not Gays in the Military?" [March 1] soon trots out the old canards while adding a few twists of his own.

Mr. Pattullo starts restating the privacy argument and later mentions the danger to morale of openly gay military personnel. Where has been the defense of privacy rights in other areas of military life? As for gay soldiers causing morale problems, with examples from Alexander's Macedonians to today's Israelis refuting this argument, please provide some examples. Mr. Pattullo also states the dangers of having a homosexual officer as the superior of a beautiful young soldier. What of straight male officers and female enlisted personnel? As for AIDS or HIV, one wonders, would Mr. Pattullo favor the exclusion, for example, of Hispanic residents of New Jersey, since this group has significantly higher than average HIV levels? Would he even consider it?

It seems that sexual involvement of straight males with their gay comrades may be Mr. Pattullo's real fear. He states that "sexual nuance . . . invades every facet of adult human relationships," and also quotes the Kinsey finding that over one-third of the men studied had reached orgasm via homosexual stimuli. The answer to this imagined difficulty is the strict enforcement of conduct regulations. However, if exclusion of an undisciplined and sexually obsessed group is called for, with Tailhook and gay-bashing incidents as evidence, that group is heterosexual, not gay, males.

Brian Hagan
Brigantine, N.J.

I don't know much about Alexander's armies in the third century B.C. (nor, I suspect, does Mr. Hagan), but the Israelis discriminate in a variety of ways between gay and straight soldiers, as do U.S. armed forces between men and women. Any suggestion of similar discrimination in the case of gays is anathema to proponents of their enlistment. Gay activists should, therefore, confront the question Mr. Hagan evades: Is not the certainty of sexual love and lust among members of necessarily close-kni t combat units likely to raise hob with morale? Tailhook simply illustrates the difficulties. Controlling human sexuality through draconian discipline involves considerable costs, the fiscal ones being least important. It is no wonder that those whose first concern must be the efficiency of our armed forces, rather than promoting the rights revolution, shrink from contending with this additional problem. —ELP

Aunt Roe's Cabin

Writes William McGurn, "Pro-lifers are fond of pointing to the parallels between abortion and slavery" ["Abortion and the GOP," March 15]. This is a very strange statement; in my experience pro-life advocates appearing in the media *never* draw this obvious and powerful parallel.

Pro-lifers should go out of their way to remind people that, at one time, people in favor of abolishing slavery were stigmatized as religious fanatics. Practical men knew slavery could not be abolished.

The parallels between pro-slavery and pro-abortion arguments are also worth noting; for example, "better off slave" and "better off dead." Merely describing the life of the slave was criticized as offensive to Southern sensibilities; the modern parallel is obvious. Yet another: "If you really believe slavery is kidnapping and murder," said the apologist for slavery, "logically you abolitionists must advocate throwing all slave owners in jail." The modern variant of this argument is a favorite of Michael Kinsley.

In general, pro-lifers have done a bad job of presenting their position. I think of Dan Quayle during the vice-presidential debate, reacting as though he hadn't expected to be questioned on abortion. He should have said something like, "Reasonable people believe in reasonable restrictions on abortion, though they may differ on where to draw the line."

Taras Wolansky
Jersey City, N.J.

A Losing GOP Strategy

An editorial in the March 29 issue opposing a GOP counter-proposal to Clinton's economic program ["Coolness under Fire"] states: "Nevertheless . . . we believe that wisdom in this instance lies with the GOP establishment." This is in line with an article in the same issue ["On the Scene"] by Brit Hume on Bob Dole, who would rather criticize Clinton's plan than come up with one of his own. Still later in the same issue, in an article advocating a strategy of confronting the Left on family issues ["How to Lose Arguments—and Elections"] Gary Bauer argues: "To be sure, all of these ideas carried political risks, not the least of which was the increased possibility of a grand 'compromise' with [family] leave proponents. But the alternative—allowing liberals to masquerade as the defenders of America's families—merited taking such a risk, especially since the battle . . . was viewed by both sides as a warm-up for the real battle to come."

It seems we have a disagreement on post-Bush strategy. The NATIONAL REVIEW editors advocate that we skirmish with the liberals rather than accepting their challenge to come up with specific recommendations (presumably involving cuts in popular programs); Gary Bauer, in an admittedly different context (government policies affecting the family), prefers a frontal attack.

Well, I can understand the motivations of Republican politicians who have been around since the Ice Age, who need to cover their butts, and who have no fixed political principles. But somehow I can't see how NATIONAL REVIEW's recommendations and the congressional Republican leadership's tactics will in any important way advance the cause versus Bill Clinton's Administration. All that can be expected from that approach is a holding action in a losing war.

Bauer questions the GOP tendency to formulate economic arguments in abstract terms. Clinton's economic program has one great strength: it is based on practical Democratic politics; it is, in other words, an extension of his electoral campaign. Any successful response to that program must in turn be based on practical Republican politics: it should not attempt to rebut his program point by point, but must constitute a coherent single program which will appeal to the Reagan coalition. Skirmishing will win no battles. The congressional Republican leadership does not understand that such a program already exists; and NATIONAL REVIEW recommends that we fish around piecemeal for it. That was President Bush's campaign approach—and his undoing.

George D. Waldman
Reading, Mass.

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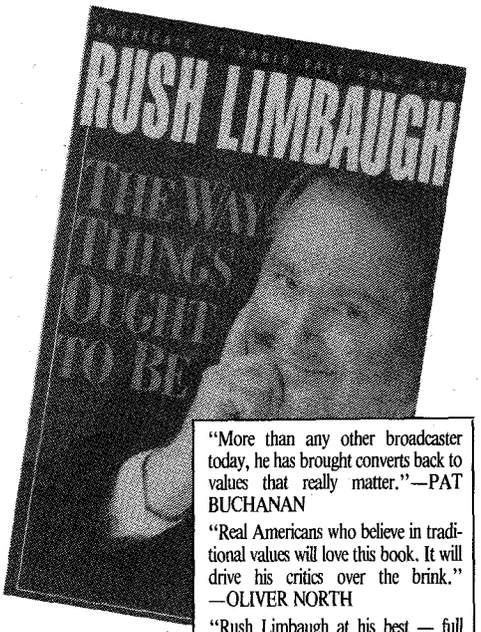

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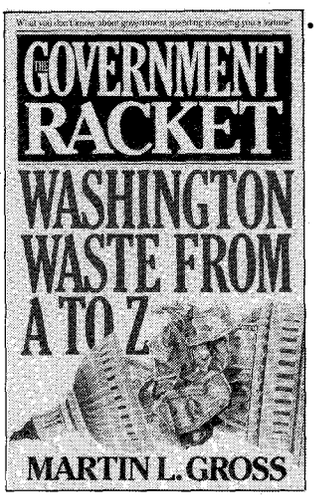

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FROM THE EDITOR

Send In the Tanks

■ Some years ago, asked by immigration authorities what was the purpose of my visit to Canada, I explained that I was there to give a speech. They were properly suspicious of such a dark purpose: what kind of a speech?

"It's called 'The Role of Think Tanks in the Political Process,'" I replied.

"Aha, a *political* speech," said the immigration officer triumphantly, and in a wonderful leap of the philosophical imagination went on to ask if I had ever been convicted of a serious crime. No? A pity. She nonetheless directed me to a room where a number of Third Worlders with dubious visas, claims for political asylum, and perhaps copies of interminable political speeches were settling down for a long wait.

I was eventually released and delivered my address with little apparent impact on Canada's political stability. But I have since concluded that the immigration authorities may have been shrewder than they looked.

In the conservative revolution which has swept the world in the last 15 years, think tanks have played a vital role: Heritage, AEI, Hoover, Cato, the Manhattan Institute in the U.S.; the Institute of Economic Affairs, the Adam Smith Institute, and the Centre for Policy Studies in Britain; and the Institut de l'Entreprise and The Tocqueville Foundation in France.

Nowhere are such bodies more vital than in the former Iron Curtain countries. There is disillusionment with socialism and statist liberalism there, and a hunger for conservative alternatives, but also a large, understandable ignorance of what they might be.

This vacuum is filled by organizations like the free-market ICRET foundation (which nurtured Yegor Gaidar) in Moscow, and the Civic Institute in Prague, which holds conferences and seminars (excellent ones if the conference on liberalism I attended last year is any guide); publishes everything from classics of conservative thought to the latest policy pamphlets on privatization and property rights; and runs a reading room for interested passersby in the middle of Prague. Unlike many West European conservatives, moreover, they are philosophically close to American conservatism.

Of course, they need help, in particular books. So if you are clearing out your library, you might send appropriate books to the Civic Institute at Cs. Armady 16, 160 00, Prague 6, the Czech Republic. Michael Semin and his colleagues at the Institute have given me a list of what they would like, which I will happily pass on.

But I somehow doubt they realize that the *Guide to the Classics* by the distinguished philosopher, the late Michael Oakeshott, concerns not Plato and Virgil, but the Derby, the Grand National, the Cheltenham Gold Cup, etc. Others have been led into bad habits by the same mistake.

■ Fareed Zakaria of *Foreign Affairs* confirms my impressionistic account of the kind of articles that his kind of magazine used to specialize in. Indeed, he gives it real historical weight and substance with this list, in reverse David Letterman fashion, of top *Foreign Affairs* articles over the years:

5. Norway's Search for a Nordpolitik.
4. Finland: Substance and Appearance.
3. Scandinavia's Peacekeeping Forces for the United Nations.
2. The New Swiss Military Capability.
1. Malaysia: A Key Area in South East Asia.

As the great English satirical fantasist, Peter Simple, complains: Inventing nonsense is hard work; reality is constantly overtaking me.

■ It is not necessary to write to me to complain about the absence of the Trans-O-Gram from this issue. I know you are offended and I apologize for the omission, just this once, of a very popular feature. But I will not grovel.

—JOHN O'SULLIVAN

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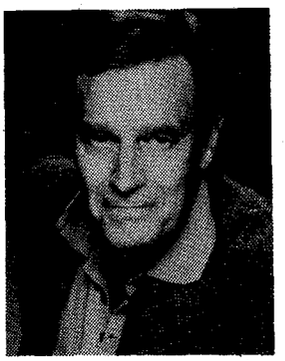

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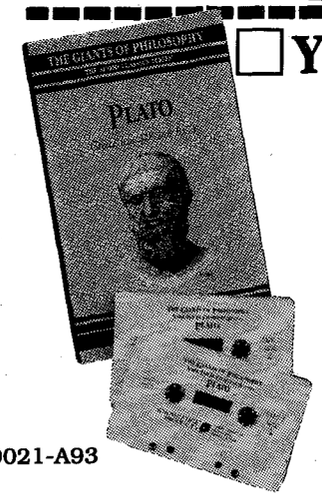

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FOR THE RECORD

■ Tagged as vulnerable in 1994: Sen. **Don Riegle** (D., Mich.), owing to anti-incumbent fever and **Keating** Five taint. Republicans' hopes bolstered by fact that popular conservative Gov. **John Engler** is also up for re-election. Likely GOP challengers include: Rep. **Fred Upton** (ACU: 75), former NRCC chief **Spencer Abraham**, and Detroit Pistons star **Bill Laimbeer**. . . . Also quite unpopular is **Bill Clinton**, whose approval rating is lowest at this point in Administration of any post-WWII President. Mid-April **Gallup** survey shows 52 per cent approve, 38 per cent disapprove. Compare with Gallup figures for predecessors at same point: **Kennedy**—72 per cent approval, 6 per cent disapproval; **Nixon**—65 to 9; **Carter**—70 to 9; **Reagan**—60 to 24; **Bush**—63 to 13. . . . Rumbles from Alabama: anti-Clinton Democratic Sen. **Richard Shelby** may plan to switch party affiliation; Shelby has been severely punished by White House and fellow Dems for opposing President's spending plans: NASA jobs were moved out of state, attempts were made to steer bill around his subcommittee. . . . Only a third of those polled throughout New York feel Gov. **Mario Cuomo** should run for re-election. Likely candidates for GOP or Conservative Party nomination are Sen. **Al D'Amato**, former ambassador to France **Evan Galbraith**, businessman **Pat Barrett**, 1990 contender **Herb London**. . . . Being urged to run, but with no plans as yet, is Joint Chiefs Chairman **Colin Powell**. The Harlem-born general has a statewide favorable rating of 68 per cent. . . . In Los Angeles mayoral race, conservative Republican **Richard Riordan** won spot in run-off with liberal Democrat **Michael Woo**. . . . Conservative Opportunity Society chairman Rep. **John Boehner** expressed dissatisfaction with Chamber of Commerce for alleging that small businesses seek government mandate forcing them to pay employee health costs. Rep. **Newt Gingrich** has escalated attack on CoC, getting typically non-confrontational Minority Leader **Bob Michel** into the fight.

■ Friends in High Places: **Peter Edelman** has been named counselor to HHS Secretary **Donna Shalala**. Mr. Edelman's wife is Children's Defense Fund Chairman **Marian Wright Edelman**. . . . **Shelley Metzenbaum**, daughter of the Ohio senator, expected to be named to assistant administrator post at EPA. . . . Top aide to U.S. Ambassador to France **Pamela Harriman** is **Avis Bohlen**. When Mrs. Harriman's late husband **Averell** became Ambassador to USSR, his top aide was **Chip Bohlen**, Avis's father. . . . Hoping to "look more like America," Clinton Administration is looking more like Washington, D.C. So far, of close to 200 top jobs filled, some 60 have gone to Washingtonians, a dozen to Marylanders, ten to Virginians.

■ Camp of the Saints? **Charles Pasqua**, former priest who has become France's new interior minister, wants to cut back immigration—now running at about 150,000 annually—by two-thirds. . . . An additional 1,600 border police have been deployed to halt flow of illegal immigrants into Germany. Head of frontier police in eastern Germany, **Diethelm Brücker**, says there were some 310,000 immigrants last year—mostly from Rumania and Bulgaria. Some 10 per cent applied immediately for political asylum. . . . Weddings between French nationals and foreigners have increased 50 per cent in past decade. Officials believe a third of such unions are frauds, with foreign men paying brides up to $10,000 to help get residence permits. . . . **Sergei Nikitich Khrushchev**, son of former Soviet leader, has applied for permanent residence in the U.S. because, he says, "I would prefer to live there than here" in Russia. Among those endorsing his application: **Richard Nixon**, **Robert McNamara**, **Strobe Talbott**. . . . Egyptian President **Hosni Mubarak** warned CIA Director **James Woolsey** that Iran is using terrorist bases in Sudan to attack Egypt and is seeking a naval base there as well. . . . Libyan dictator **Muammar Qaddafi** has indicated to U.S. officials that he wants a deal with United States—starting with an end to U.S. embargo—now that his former ally, the Soviet Union, has disappeared. . . . In an interview in *International Herald-Tribune*, Qaddafi invited Libyan Jews expelled in 1978 to come back. . . . A growing number of students in China are communicating by electronic mail with student friends in United States. One computer program, however, was infected with a virus: the student in China sees a question on his screen asking whether he likes Prime Minister **Li Peng**. If he says yes, the virus wipes out computer's memory.

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"Some people find my husband too rough and full bodied."

■ Young America's Foundation presents its 15th annual Conservative Student Conference, to be held in Washington, D.C., July 25–31. Speakers include **Cap Weinberger**, **Walter Williams**, **Dinesh D'Souza**, and **Bay Buchanan**. For info, write Foundation at 110 Elden St., Herndon, Va. 22070. . . . Institute of World Politics, with Boston U., to offer summer evening courses in D.C. Faculty includes: **Vladimir Bukovsky**, **Angelo Codevilla**, **Michael Novak**. Contact Institute at 1420 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

■ When liberal Republicans in Texas formed Take It Back, political group which aims to keep social issues off party platform, conservative **David Rucker** formed You Can Have It. Rucker also suggested Take It Back rename itself The Phone Booth Group.

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THE WEEK

■ Scolding the Republicans for opposing his budget, President Clinton reasoned: "I mean, the Senate's got a swimming pool, doesn't it? . . . built with taxpayers' money." Yes, but aren't the cities in enough trouble without modeling them on the U.S. Senate?

■ A funny thing happened in Los Angeles after the latest Rodney King verdict: not only were there no riots, but the crime rate dipped sharply. On Saturday night, the streets were actually *safe*. CNN showed South-Central residents remarking happily on the unusual number of police around. "It's safe," said one black man, "but I don't see why we can't have this sort of presence all the time." Well, the last time we had urban riots, back in the Sixties, we decided to reorder our priorities.

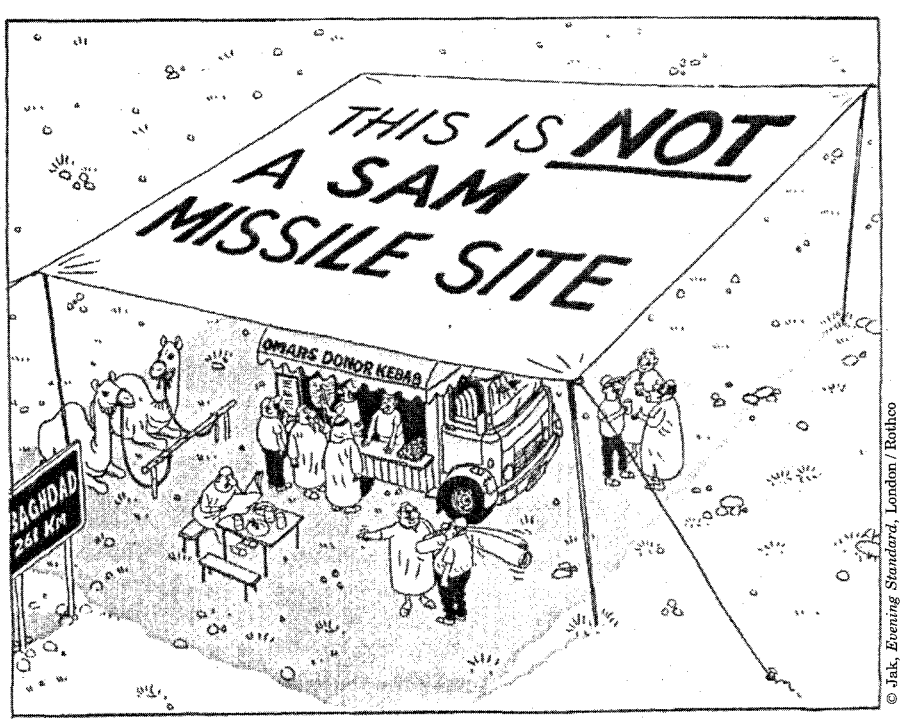
■ Eager job-seekers in the new Administration may have to keep waiting. Seems there was such a backlog in the processing of incoming résumés—logging them into one of the super new computers they're so proud of—that thousands of CVs were piling up in offices in the New Executive Office Building. Hearing that the boss, personnel director Bruce Lindsey, was making an inspection tour, panicked staffers boxed up 25,000 of same and dispatched them to Presidential Files (a/k/a Clinton Library archives, a/k/a the Memory Hole). The *Washington Times* uncovered the cover-up. Apparently some Bushies did something similar in 1989, but today's Democrats have one consolation: If the "jobs" bill passes, they can apply for all those leaf-raking and swimming-pool-construction jobs.

■ When February's strong employment numbers weakened the case for a stimulus package, Labor Secretary Robert Reich claimed that "90 per cent" of the new positions created that month were temporary, and implied that this figure came from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. It turns out the figure was gleaned from a census report that uses different methodology. To control Mr. Reich's attempt at damage control, the Bureau of Labor Statistics issued a correction saying that about 25 per cent of the new jobs created last year were temporary, and that this percentage had not changed appreciably in the past 18 months. One advantage of Mr. Reich's promotion: now his statistics get checked.

■ Remember when NBC News got its nose burned for faking a fire in a GM pickup for its program *Dateline NBC*? Well now the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has urged General Motors to recall all five million pickups equipped with "sidesaddle" gasoline tanks because its statistical risk modeling suggests these may be responsible for 5 to 6 of the 40,000 road-crash deaths per year. The cost to GM of fitting a protective cage around five million gas tanks: a cool $1 billion. The NHTSA is right to be concerned about preventable deaths—but why, then, is it focusing on GM rather than on the big-time killer, the Environmental Protection Agency. The downsizing of cars forced by the EPA's fuel-economy measures is estimated to have boosted road deaths by 2,000 a year, and the ban on asbestos in brake linings by several hundred. Time for a recall of EPA regulations? Nah.

■ Incidentally, the *Washington Post* reports the Commerce Department is looking to spend $1 billion to help the Big Three automakers develop a non-polluting vehicle. Memo to Ron Brown: if you need a catchy trade-name, how about "Bike."

■ If there is any consolation for the broken Clinton pledges that inhabit Promise Limbo, it's got to be



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the company—there's lots of it. The latest arrivals: 1) Candidate Clinton pledged to hire 100,000 more police officers nationwide, but his latest proposals would pay for just 10,000, and plans for future spending won't get Mr. Clinton even halfway to his promise by the end of his term. 2) Mr. Clinton is requesting an increase in the intelligence budget, despite a vow to whack it substantially (a promise that deserved breaking). 3) A bevy of Clintonisms courtesy of *Spy* magazine's "First 100 Lies" story—which features fibs ranging from reporting his pants size as 45 long (really 46 regular) to stating "I don't like the word *sacrifice*" (hah!)—includes a broken half-promise: he attacked wool and mohair subsidies as anachronisms, then cut the program a mere 6 per cent. 4) And on the Value Added Tax, we're still counting—how many promises in a somersault?

■ Gay activists are distressed by a new survey that puts their numbers well below the claimed 10 per cent. The Battelle Human Affairs Research Centers in Seattle found that only 1.1 per cent of 3,321 men polled described themselves as exclusively homosexual. The gay response, of course, was to attack the accuracy, methodology, and relevance of the poll. Rights, it was said, don't depend on numbers. Well, *real* rights don't. But bogus rights may depend heavily on a political bluff. The goal of gay propaganda is to achieve equality of *respectability* for homosexual and heterosexual conduct as equally valid "lifestyles." The larger the number of homosexuals, the easier it is to claim this status for homosexuality. Whereas 1.1 per cent looks a bit . . . eccentric.

■ The Texas Senate race will surely not be decided on May 1, when Texans choose from a list of 24 candidates to fill the slot opened by the elevation of Lloyd Bentsen. A run-off will follow (see "Mr. Clinton's Neighbors," p. 18). But for conservatives, the preliminary vote is crucial. In order to win a place on the final ballot, Congressman Jack Fields, a principled conservative, will need to defeat two fellow Republicans: Congressman Joe Barton, an equally principled conservative, and a country-club Republican and feminist named Kay Hutchison. Recent polls put Mr. Fields 7 points ahead of Mr. Barton—but 3 points behind Mrs. Hutchison. The last thing Texas needs is a George Bush in drag. But that is exactly what the competition between Mr. Fields and Mr. Barton threatens to ensure. With apologies to Mr. Barton, whom we admire, we urge all Texas Republicans to support Jack Fields.

■ One last Eastern European joke: Every prophecy of Karl Marx—the increasing misery of the workers, the concentration of power in the ruling class, the inability of the economic structure to exploit new technology, repression—came true. Under Communism.

■ It was Thomas Gresham (1519–1579) who articulated the "law" that bad money drives good money out of circulation. The latest evidence for Gresham's insight is Russia, where, according to AEI economist Irwin Stelzer, most of the hard currency flowing in from the West "will end up in the Swiss bank accounts of Russian officials, if past experience is any guide." With inflation running at 2,000 per cent per month, the criteria set last year for Western aid clearly haven't been approached. We suspect, in fact, that the $28-billion aid package cobbled together by the G-7 is pure symbolism, "more of a campaign contribution to Boris Yeltsin than a gift to the Russian people," as Stelzer says. Western governments should aid Russia only when it is clearly in their interest to do so. That might mean purchasing and destroying Russian defense systems, helping clean up hot nuclear plants, and so on. But whoever is in the Kremlin, large-scale credits are unthinkable so long as bad money is forcing out good.

■ Over 80 per cent of the Italian electorate has just voted to shift from pure proportional representation (PR) to something closer to America's "first past the post" system in forming the Italian Senate. This clear sentiment is expected to force similar reform of the lower house of parliament. PR, which guarantees that if the Silly Party draws 10 per cent of the vote nationwide, it will receive 10 per cent of the seats, is the path to political paralysis, encouraging a hopelessly factionalized parliament, as in, e.g., Israel. The near-universal lubricant for political gridlock is patronage, yielding in extreme cases to influence peddling, kickbacks, etc. Thus a system which is intended to promote perfect democracy in fact guarantees bad government. And the bigger the government, the more grease is needed: hence the scandals that have rocked Italy from Sicily to Piedmont. We congratulate the Italian people, and reform leader Mario Segni, for choosing the rational response to this crisis; we hope that the infant democracies of Eastern and Central Europe, currently hobbled by PR systems that nurture neo-Communists, -fascists, and other factions, follow suit soon, while they still have a chance.

■ Now running "every two minutes," according to one conceivably exaggerated complaint, on the Department of Transportation's closed-circuit television system is an ad for Gay Lesbian or Bisexual Employees (GLOBE)—and, by the way, where in the Constitution does it say that government departments should have their own TV stations?

■ Campus Watch: Early one recent morning a group of black students at the University of Pennsylvania trashed almost all 14,000 copies of the student newspaper, apparently in response to the opinions of a

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conservative student columnist. Lamented Penn President Sheldon Hackney: "Two important university values, diversity and open expression, seem to be in conflict." (One seems to be losing, by the way.) After making their contribution to Penn's diversity, the paper-trashing students complained about their treatment at the hands of university police. Mr. Hackney appointed not one but *two* committees to investigate their complaints. The Penn president, recently nominated by President Clinton to head the National Endowment for the Humanities, professes to be "somewhere in no man's land" in the battles over PC. Obviously. This may pass as sophistication, but it looks more like cover for weak knees.

■ Louis Farrakhan, top banana of the Fruit of Islam, sought to end his feud with the Jews by playing the Violin Concerto of Felix Mendelssohn (a Jew). Surrounded by fifty of his trademark bowtied bodyguards, Mr. Farrakhan seems to have intended the concert as a symbolic event, except that the symbolism went somewhat awry. The event was held on the Jewish Sabbath, which means, according to Jewish law, that no Jew should have been in attendance. Strike one. Afterward, Mr. Farrakhan announced he would follow up with a reprise of Mendelssohn, at a Chicago church with a Jewish cantor participating—another no-no. Strike two. Finally, though Mendelssohn was technically a Jew, his ambitious father had early on converted the family to Protestantism, which makes the composer, in Jewish eyes, an apostate. Strike three, maestro, you're out. But, hey, it's the thought that counts.

■ What took Phileas Fogg eighty days to accomplish, with the assistance of railways, steam engines, and the odd elephant, a French sailboat has achieved in 79. *Commodore Explorer*, an 86-foot catamaran skippered by Bruno Peyron with a crew of four, including America's Cup veteran Cam Lewis, returned to Ile d'Ouessant after tearing around the world at 15 knots, taking a *month* off the previous 109-day record. In nautical terms, it's like breaking the sound barrier. But from a scientific perspective, the meteorological work, human and computer, that enabled the *Commodore Explorer* to find enough wind to do it is closer to exceeding the speed of light. It's a great day in the annals of seamanship and software alike. If the boat had been around a long time ago, Ferdinand Magellan would be remembered as the author of "What I Did in My Summer Vacation." Captain and crew were embraced upon their return by, *naturellement*, Jules Verne IV.

■ A chap in Maidenhead, England, who left his house for a few days last autumn now stands accused of abandoning his pet fish, including a sucking loach. Leaving your fish home alone can be a serious matter in mysterious England. If the fellow is found guilty of abandoning his fish in circumstances likely to cause them to suffer, he could face six months in jail or a hefty fine, or both. However, when he asked for more time to prepare his defense, magistrates ruled that he was stalling and fined him £200 ($309). The case will be heard next month, if there is still an England by then.

So Long, Cy

As Boutros Boutros-Ghali grasps
At straws, and Muslims grasp at asps,
The Bosnian and Belgrade Serbs
Are pounding Sarajevo's burbs,
While Mr. Clinton looks as if
He hopes the lot falls off a cliff.

W. H. VON DREELE

Bosnia Boils Over

THE RUMOR in Washington is that the Clinton Administration is preparing stronger action against Serb depredations in Bosnia, once Boris Yeltsin's April 25 referendum is out of the way and once our allies are on board. The Administration's outrage—or, more accurately, the outrage of public opinion to which it is responding—was provoked by the brutal assault on the town of Srebrenica, in defiance of UN peacekeepers' efforts to feed and minister to the town's 60,000 Muslim inhabitants. Even Russia (whose people tend to support the Serbs) joined in UN Security Council condemnations.

President Clinton's policy up to now has been feeble. Having criticized Mr. Bush during the campaign for moral insensitivity, he has since conducted a policy of pious criticism of Serbia backed by inaction. Mr. Bush, who was wary of a messy military intervention, at least could not be called hypocritical. *NR* chided him for his passivity and has long urged lifting the perverse UN embargo on the transfer of arms to those defending themselves. We praised Mr. Clinton for making the same recommendation in his campaign. After he came into office, however, he let the weenies get to him—the Vance–Owen delusion, the timid Christopherites, the politicos who wanted no distractions from the wonderful economic program. "We concentrated on the diplomatic option," an insider confided to *Newsweek*, "precisely because all options were too hard." Precisely.

Now, as the pressures to do something grow, there is talk of lifting the UN arms embargo. This would

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be a good start—but only a start. If our allies and the Russians don't go along, we should arm the Bosnians, Croatians, and others covertly. (A while back there were reports that the Russians *would* go along if the embargo were nominally lifted for both sides. This is just about tolerable, since Serbia's victims, desperately in need of arms, would gain more from lifting the ban.)

The next step is to contemplate more drastic military action. To do nothing is hardly an option. In the age of television, when the human suffering is in our living rooms daily, public opinion will not accept complete passivity by a superpower in the face of horrors like ethnic cleansing.

But what kind of action? Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan have urged that we face the question of military action squarely—but both oppose the introduction of Western ground troops. Rightly so. So-called humanitarian intervention achieves little. Ensuring safe passage for food convoys to besieged cities like Srebrenica does no more than give the condemned man a hearty meal. And the troops then become hostages to the Serbs against more effective military intervention by their governments. The Bosnians would rather have the weapons and forgo the UN relief convoys.

As for a major land invasion to defeat Serbia, even if it were to prevail quickly—as we think likely; contrary to myth, the various Yugoslav partisans gave the Wehrmacht little trouble—a peace achieved by Western troops would require a permanent Western garrison to enforce it. Neither the U.S. nor the West Europeans are prepared to supply that.

That leaves Western air power to support Bosnian resistance-fighters and to break the back of Serbian power. The aim of such a policy would be to alter the local balance of military power and thus to create the conditions for some future political settlement. Any such settlement would rest upon the greater equality between a weakened Serbia and a better-armed Bosnia—and also upon the knowledge that Western air power could return more readily than Western ground troops. That threat will be all the more effective if air power means destroying not only Serb artillery and bridges in Bosnia, but also military installations in Serbia itself. We warn against one-time air strikes and incrementalism, recalling the lesson of Vietnam that such limited efforts only advertise our hesitations and encourage resistance. If we engage militarily, we must be prepared to do so overwhelmingly and decisively. Milosevic and his thugs may think they can hunker down and outlast us as the North Vietnamese did. Saddam Hussein had the same idea—and he was proved wrong. But it didn't happen on the cheap.

The Play's the Thing

With Hillary as Eleanor
  And Bill as FDR,
Scene I's been kind of bumpy, but
  Undoubtedly the star
Will gargle in the dressing room
  As stage hands pull and haul,
Though faces on first-nighters have
  Begun to cast a pall.

W. H. VON DREELE

Conflagration

SHORTLY after the Waco cult compound had been consumed by fire, Attorney General Janet Reno accepted responsibility for the decision to attack, which she conceded had been an error. That probably represented the general public impression as we went to press. Not surprisingly. It appears that about 80 people died in the fire, including David Koresh, his "wives," and 24 children—a horrible human tragedy by any standard. But how was it brought about?

The initial raid on the compound last February remains a mystery. The justification then given by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms was that the cult was suspected of converting legal semi-automatic weapons into illegal automatic ones. That falls considerably short of murder or robbery, but doubtless it looked ominous. Why, then, did the authorities, federal or local, not arrest Koresh on one of his frequent visits outside the compound? Why was the first step to go in with all guns blazing? And what was the legal underpinning for this raid?

If there are good answers to these questions, we have yet to hear them. For practical purposes, however, they became moot when Koresh and his followers opened fire, killed four federal officials, and resisted an official siege. From that point, the government had little alternative to arresting Koresh and his accomplices by whatever means necessary. It therefore imposed a siege: cutting off electricity and communications, shining bright lights around the clock, blaring rock music and other loud noises. And when these did not draw the cultists out, the FBI mounted a partial raid, lobbing tear-gas into the compound and breaching its walls. The cult members, thinking this an all-out assault, set fire to their haven with themselves and their children inside. It is a horrible irony that a raid, intended to prevent mass suicide and child abuse, should have led to the death of 24 children in a collective frenzy.

By the siege's end Koresh and his followers were like hijackers who cannot escape but who can mur-

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der their hostages (in this case, their own children, but perhaps some adult outsiders too). Seeking the release of hostages by attacking their captors always carries a high risk. If it fails, as it failed tragically here, onlookers think it a mistake. But mounting a siege indefinitely may fail too; the mass suicide at Jonestown was uncoerced. And an assault carried out differently—with greater speed and ruthlessness—might well have succeeded.

The lesson of this episode is not that the use of force was wrong in itself, but that at every stage the government acted incompetently. Its initial raid was overdone and botched; its siege was abandoned, apparently for no good reason; and a slow-motion assault, meant to increase the pressure on cult members, persuaded them that this was the long-awaited Götterdämmerung, giving them both the incentive and the chance to commit mass suicide. If Miss Reno is willing to admit error, let her own up to this catalogue. But we weaken ourselves in the battle against cults of all kinds—religious, political, and terrorist—if we conclude that force is always too risky, even in surer hands.

Justice Unseen

PERHAPS justice was done in the second Rodney King trial. God knows. But what was seen to be done was not justice, but politics. To begin with, federal intervention in the form of a second trial, defensible when law-enforcement authorities and juries act plainly as accomplices to murder as in *Mississippi Burning*, was here the result of plainly political considerations: a belief that *something* had to be done in the face of the riots. Even if the original verdict was wrong—something which is not established by the second verdict—it was not so wrong as to justify double jeopardy (cf. Roger Parloff's article in *Legal Times*, demonstrating that the Simi Valley jurors reached a reasonable judgment on the evidence before them). Liberal politics is the incontestable reason that the Los Angeles policemen had to face a second trial while the murderers of Yankel Rosenbaum and Meir Kahane—acquitted by racially biased juries despite much clearer evidence of much worse crimes—won their game of jeopardy.

In addition, improper considerations could not but influence this trial. Most obviously, the jury was anxious about fresh riots. "Sometimes we forgot the scope of violence that could be accomplished from our verdicts," one juror explained. And the other times . . . they did not forget. Here was a coerced verdict—coerced by the fear of underclass riots and no less by the fear of Establishment disapproval.

Local and national elites saw the case almost exclusively in symbolic terms: cops savaging a black victim. A guilty verdict was necessary as symbolic racial reparations. President Clinton, praising the verdict, found a "deeper meaning": "a determination to reaffirm our common humanity and to make a strength of our diversity." In which case, what will be the significance if the verdict is reversed on appeal?

That is presumably unthinkable to liberal opinion. The videotape was endlessly replayed precisely because it seemed to confirm the liberal prejudice that police brutality goes on all the time; indeed, *only* that segment of the tape which bolstered that belief was replayed. Accordingly, the actual case was blown well out of proportion. Rodney King, after all, was not killed, maimed, or crippled by the Los Angeles police. No prosecutor has tried to make a case that a racial motive explained the beating he received (a charge difficult to prove, given that his two black passengers who did not resist arrest were unharmed). Yet for two years the case captured national attention, countless hours of media coverage, prodigious efforts on the part of the Justice Department, and millions of public dollars. Most of the twenty thousand murders committed each year don't even make it into the papers.

Is Los Angeles safer now that Sergeant Koon and Officer Powell have been convicted? Or less safe? Is police brutality really a greater problem in Los Angeles, or *anywhere* in America, than urban violence? The National Center for Public Policy Research, in a "Rodney King newsletter," points out the expected punishment for major crimes in the U.S. in 1990: for robbery: 23 days; for murder: 1.8 years; for rape: 60 days; for arson: 6.7 days; for burglary: 4.8 days; for motor vehicle theft: 1.5 days. Rodney King, as it happens, was on parole from a robbery conviction on the night he was stopped. And on the "social justice" front, "Los Angeles County received more federal aid than any other county in the United States in 1991"; and total social spending as a percentage of GNP grew from 6.7 per cent in 1960 to 14.4 in 1990. The liberal attack on crime's "root causes" is a conspicuous failure.

But liberal obstruction of crime prevention has been all too successful. The last thirty years have seen disciplinary actions, sensitivity training, elaborate *Miranda*-type procedures, civilian review boards, and countless other "signals" to—and formal restraints on—the police, forcing officers to acquire the cautious habits of bureaucrats rather than the decisiveness needed to preserve public safety. The failure of our national, state, and local governments to control crime ought to be of greater concern than the few cases of police brutality.

Does President Clinton or Attorney General Reno understand this? Watch Miss Reno's sentencing recommendation for Messrs. Powell and Koon. Should she call for the maximum, despite this being a first

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offense after a second trial, you'll know that New Democrats, like the Old, fear the police more than they fear criminals. And that their motto is: "Let politics be done—though the Heavens fall."

VAT Again

NOW THAT the value-added tax is a "serious option" for financing health care, some economists are touting its alleged advantages. Compared to income taxes, a broad-based consumption tax would indeed stimulate savings and investment. Sales taxes like VAT can be imposed on goods entering the country and rebated on goods leaving, thus helping close the trade deficit. In theory, computing tax liability under a uniform, single-rate VAT would be a piece of cake compared to the infinite complexities of corporate-income taxation.

But the theoretical case for VAT depends on its being used to replace, or at least *reduce*, existing taxes. Back in the 1950s and 1960s the nations of Western Europe replaced the turnover tax, a quirky tax that companies paid on the full amount of every sale rather than just the value added, with a VAT. More recently, Canada introduced a Goods and Services Tax to replace a tax imposed on manufacturers, and Australia considered—and rejected—a 15 per cent VAT in exchange for cutting other taxes. Only Mr. Clinton has the chutzpah to contemplate VAT as an *additional* tax, and this while increasing the rates of existing taxes.

What makes a VAT so dangerous is that politicians can't resist raising a tax whose burden is incorporated into product prices, and thus hidden from voters. Britain's VAT rate was 10 per cent when the tax was first introduced in 1973; it is 17.5 per cent today. Sweden's rate is now 25 per cent, up from 11 per cent in 1969. In fact, almost every European country has increased VAT rates frequently and substantially, using the revenues to finance social spending. As a result, while the share of GDP taken by taxes has remained constant in the VAT-less U.S., it has risen steadily in Europe. The alleged economic benefits of VAT were nullified by the rising overall tax burden.

Nor is the VAT all that simple. In practice the "neutral" VAT is levied at different rates on different products. Food and clothing are usually taxed lightly to mitigate regressivity, and non-profit institutions are usually exempt from the tax. This makes for an administrative nightmare, since each business must calculate the VAT charged to it by every one of its suppliers and apply for a rebate of the tax. Moreover, based on the European experience, the IRS would require twenty thousand additional employees to administer a national VAT, at a cost of at least $1 billion. A recent *Wall Street Journal* editorial claims that nothing less than a 7 per cent VAT, yielding an additional $210 billion a year, makes sense in the light of these costs.

Governors and mayors, having long considered the sales tax as their exclusive turf, would have some choice words for a President who dared intrude. A VAT would also stymie Mr. Clinton's goal of lower interest rates. At a minimum, imposition of the tax would produce a one-shot burst of inflation.

Health-care reform needs appropriate tax approaches. Income-tax credits, for example, could make it easier for uninsured individuals to purchase private health insurance. A VAT, however, would merely conceal the true cost of health care from taxpayers. Its imposition would make genuine cost control less necessary—and thus much less likely.

Please Listen, Mr. Mayor

WHEN NEW YORKERS complain among themselves about the spiraling deterioration of urban life, they can pretty well assume that their complaints will never reach the well-insulated ears of New York's ruling liberal politicians. Similarly Washingtonians, who were outraged during the recent series of drive-by shootings, because Mayor Sharon Pratt Kelly didn't bother even to set foot in the afflicted neighborhood until Attorney General Janet Reno announced she intended to pay a visit. Enter Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan.

At a meeting of the Association for a Better New York, with Mayor David Dinkins in attendance, Mr. Moynihan lashed out at the miserable living conditions over which Dinkins complacently presides. New Yorkers, he said, have developed a protective carapace, like the numbed, slogging tunnel vision of "combat infantrymen," to get through the day. He attributed the disappearance of civility to the disintegration of the family: "There are parts of this city where family has disappeared." Mr. Moynihan went on to contrast the present state of disrepair with memories of his own New York youth, in Hell's Kitchen, no less. Back then, he recalled, New York boasted residents who were "in many ways the best-behaved citizenry" of any big city in the country. Great public works such as the George Washington Bridge and LaGuardia Airport were constructed in a few years, not the ten to twenty it would take now. "Begging your pardon, Mr. Mayor, sir," Moynihan bitterly apologized.

Throughout, Mr. Mayor sat and fumed. Afterward he told a reporter that "the good old days weren't so good." Back then, Dinkins recalled, he was forced to sit at the back of the bus. Of course that's not a prob-

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"Have a seat. I'll be with you in a minute."

lem now. Today, in certain parts of the city, you'd have to be crazy to get on the bus in the first place.

Garbage Heresy

THE GREENIE magazine *Garbage* is in deep doo-doo with many readers for defending disposable diapers. A recent issue pointed out that washing the cloth variety makes similar demands on energy resources and releases chemicals into the environment just like the manufacture of the disposable paper type. Hardly a shattering revelation, perhaps, but it provoked letters like this:

"Please cancel my subscription and refund my money in full. I read enough of this c--- elsewhere."

"*Garbage* has become an apologist for the disposables industry. Procter & Gamble is pursuing shameless tactics to make the world safe for disposable diapers. Luckily New York was not fooled."

"Greedy mega-corporations such as Procter & Gamble purposefully [*sic*] inject cancer-causing dioxins into disposable diapers and maybe a decade into the future our sons will be dying of scrotum cancer."

The latest issue has another shot at the ultra-greens. A backpage column called "In the Dumpster" takes Greenpeace to task for calling for a boycott on du Pont products including polystyrene food containers foamed with ozone-depleting chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). *Garbage* points out that polystyrene is not foamed with CFCs and guesses that Greenpeace knows this. *Garbage* thinks that when environmental groups are seen as deceitful and hysterical "then all environmentalism is tarnished." True, but as their letters show, deceit and hysteria are what many environmentalists want.

NOTES & ASIDES

■ Dear Mr. Buckley:

The enclosed clip, a column by Aissatou Sidime, comes from the *Oakland Tribune*, which relentlessly pushes the liberal agenda—even more so now that it has received a grant from the Gannett Foundation.

I draw your attention to the sentence, "As the country moves toward increased ethnic and gender diversity . . ." Increased *gender* diversity! That's a new one, even for the *Tribune*. Maybe they've been working overtime in the science lab.

Yours truly,
Jim Grodnik,
Oakland, Calif.

Dear Mr. Grodnik: Sounds fascinating. On the other hand, I think I've met some of those . . . Cordially,
WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley:

After years of relentless searching, I finally found the man of my dreams. We plan to be married. However, I do have a problem.

My sister voted for Bill Clinton. My mother has thought for the past 17 years that the CIA has had a transmitter implanted in her brain. She says that she receives messages from Moscow every Tuesday evening. My father had a sex-change operation last year, so now I have two mothers (just like Heather). He changed his name from Horace to Hortense. My older brother is serving time in the state pen for attempted murder, and he bears a striking resemblance to Barbra Streisand. My younger brother sells drugs to 12-year-olds on the playground.

Now back to my problem. I really love this man and I don't want to lose him. Should I tell him about my sister?

Very truly yours,
Nancy E. Camp
Front Royal, Va.

Dear Nancy: You are putting me on, but it's fun. Cordially,
WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley:

Is it "the Presidents Clinton" or "the President Clintons"? I'm confused.

Sincerely,
Jeffry Jamouneau
Harrisburg, Pa.

Dear Mr. Jamouneau: I don't know. But maybe Dee Dee will tell us. Cordially,
—WFB

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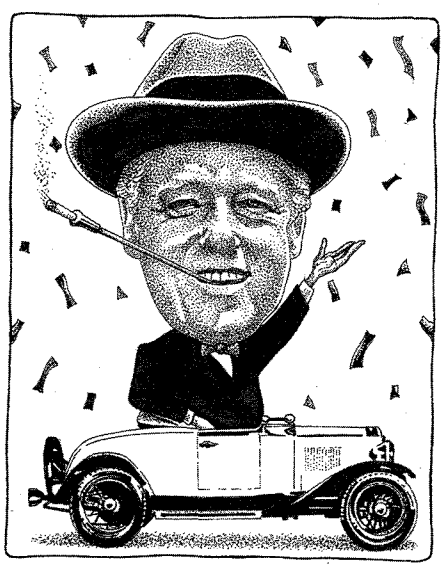
ON THE SCENE

A Government Kind of Guy

BRIT HUME



D. F. Bach

WASHINGTON, D.C.

IN Chillicothe, Ohio, on the morning of February 19, members of the traveling White House press corps awoke in motel rooms so frigid that all the heat had collected near the ceiling, refusing to descend to bed level. Many had spent the night shivering under the covers in their clothes. They had made the trip to be with the President as he began his nationwide sales campaign for his budget plan, which he and they were calling his "economic program." The day would prove memorable, and not just because of the brutal weather. Bill Clinton in the space of a few hours would say and do more to reveal himself than at perhaps any time before or since, though the extent of the day's meaning would not become clear until later.

His first event was a town meeting at the local high school, where he received a thunderous reception and conducted himself with aplomb. No surprise there, not after the dazzling performance two nights earlier in the House chamber when he had announced his program and spoken for it with unsurpassed authority and conviction, for the most part extemporaneously. He had received standing ovations in which even such Republican conservatives as Phil Gramm found themselves joining.

One of his questioners in Chillicothe asked why he had proposed an energy tax. "Why not develop a national sales tax, which would be equal to all consumers?" she asked.

Mr. Clinton plunged into his answer with gusto, speaking approvingly, almost longingly, of such a tax. "Almost every country that I know of that we compete with, advanced countries—all the European countries and Japan and Canada have a national sales tax. They call it a value-added tax." He went on to explain how a VAT works, noting that manufacturers like it because it is imposed on imported products while exports are exempt. "Now," he said, "here's why I didn't propose it right now. That is a radical change in the tax system of the United States. It is something I think we may well have to look at in the years ahead. But I did not want to confuse two different things: one is the imperative of getting the deficit down with the need to maybe change our tax system. I mean, there's only so much change a country can accommodate at the same time."

If that had been all he said, it might have been noted as the mere ruminations of an inveterate policy wonk. But after defending his energy tax, he came back to the VAT. "I do believe," he said, "that America, at another time, and maybe not too long in the future, will debate whether we want to shift the nature of our tax system because we're in a global economy. . . . You've got to be careful how you do it so you don't make it a regressive tax. But they can be designed that way, and we're the only major nation without one." Afterward, as the motorcade wended its way to the airport, the press bus was abuzz over the VAT. It looked to be the day's lead story. But Mr. Clinton made an impromptu stop at an elementary school where the children were standing outside in the arctic air to wave at him. By now, his staff had gotten wind of the press's interest, and Mr. Clinton paused at the school long enough to answer a reporter's shouted question about the VAT.

"It is not something that is now under consideration," he said firmly, "If we start considering it, I'll tell you. I didn't float a trial balloon or anything today. I was just discussing the tax in response to the question."

That unequivocal answer was good enough to knock the story down that day, but it was hardly surprising the notion of a VAT had triggered such interest. The idea has been talked about in Washington for 15 years, most conspicuously when Oregon Democratic Congressman Al Ullman, then chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, proposed a VAT in 1979 as a way of cutting income taxes. Ullman was strongly encouraged by Charls Walker, the influential lobbyist and former Treasury undersecretary, who believed it was a sure way to further his pet cause, reducing the cost of capital to business. Because a VAT is levied on consumption, it is seen as a way to encourage saving, which adds to the capital available for investment. Ullman, who had seemed in no political danger before he started talking about the VAT, was excused from Congress by Oregon voters in 1980. Such lessons are not forgotten in Washington.

Liberals are skeptical of a VAT for the reasons cited by the President—the belief that, like sales taxes generally, it would be regressive. Conservatives fear that the VAT, being a "hidden" tax, would be politically easy to increase and would become a virtual money machine to fund ever larger government.

Nonetheless, in the weeks ahead, reports repeatedly surfaced from the health-care reform task force headed by Hillary Clinton that the VAT was being discussed as a way to finance what was turning out to be a staggeringly expensive undertaking—extend-

Mr. Hume is chief White House correspondent for ABC News.

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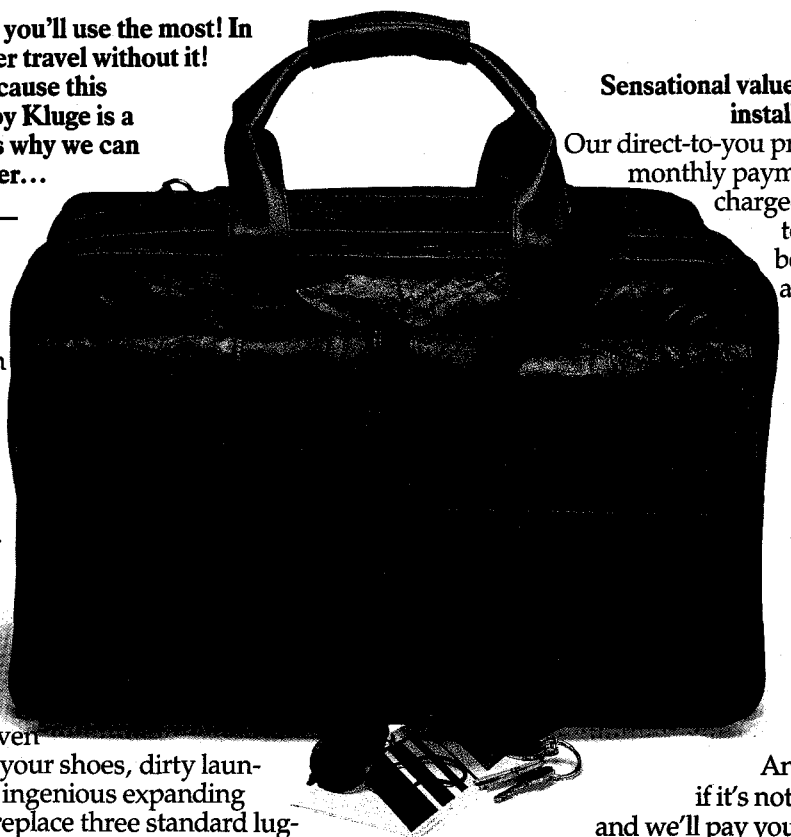

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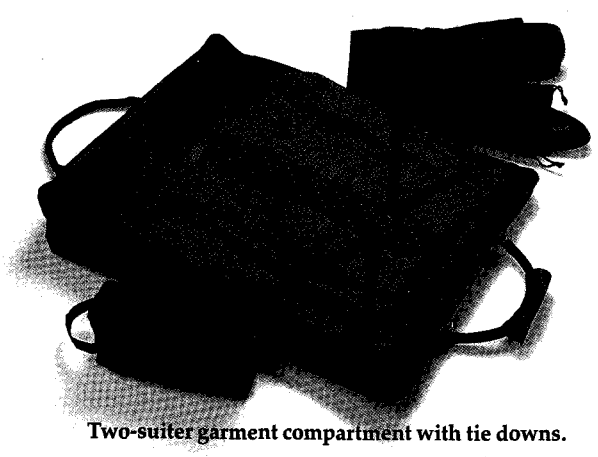

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ing health-care insurance to all. These reports were repeatedly denied at the White House. "It is not something that is currently being discussed," said press secretary Dee Dee Myers on March 25. Communications Director George Stephanopoulos went further, saying a VAT "will not be in [the health-care] proposal." On April 13, though, Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala, a close friend of both the President and Mrs. Clinton, told *USA Today*, almost casually, that a VAT was indeed being considered to pay for health-care reform. The President would say only that he hadn't made any decision on it. White House reporters demanded to know why the President, who had ruled that out and said, in effect, "If it changes, I'll tell you," had not done so. The answer from Dee Dee Myers was: "It's changed and we told you."

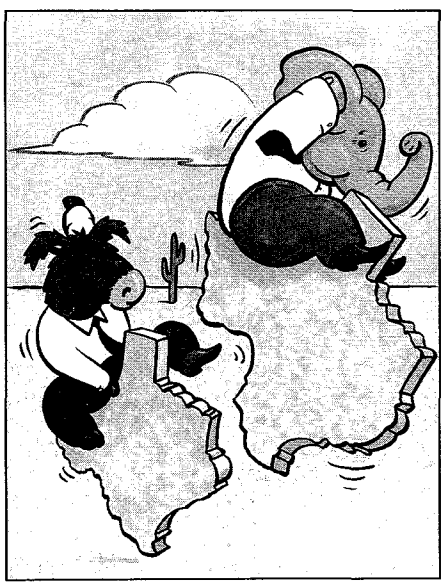
It seems more likely, however, that nothing had changed, that the VAT had been an option all along and the President and his team had denied it because they did not want to be accused of what Bob Dole called "rampant tax fever." Aides privately say they still doubt Mr. Clinton will go for a VAT. Looking back at February 19, though, it seems likely the reprieve, if it happens, will be temporary.

After Chillicothe, Mr. Clinton flew to Newburgh, New York, and motorcaded from there to Franklin Roosevelt's home town of Hyde Park. Dozens of people lined the roads to watch him pass, including a man holding a sign that said, "Just Do Something." Mr. Clinton loved that. He has not stopped talking about it since. His Hyde Park speech, delivered in the auditorium of a WPA-built school (a "beautiful school," he called it), was a manifesto of government activism. He denounced the Reagan Administration. "What we have done is try for 12 years to cramp the role of government," he complained. He would follow Franklin Roosevelt's example of "bold, persistent experimentation." "We're in a global economy in which the government and the people and the private sector have to work together. . . . We've got to work together to have economic policies that encourage investment over consumption so we can always be competitive." He didn't mention the VAT, but he was, in effect, making the case for it.

Some of Mr. Clinton's critics have characterized him as an utterly flexible politician with no deep belief in anything. Paul Greenberg, editorial-page editor of the *Arkansas Democrat Gazette*, says Mr. Clinton is "hollow at his core." But he does exhibit a profound and abiding belief in one thing: government. That leads inevitably to a search for ways to finance it. In such an atmosphere, a VAT, and a multitude of other taxes, will always be under consideration. □

Mr. Clinton's Neighbors

WILLIAM MURCHISON



Robert Prince

DALLAS

ON MAY 1, Texans will declare their choice for the Senate seat formerly held by Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen.

Bill Clinton had better fasten his seatbelt. A Republican could win.

To be sure, the question isn't likely to be settled May 1. With 24 candidates in the race, a runoff in late May or early June seems certain. But the White House has to be eyeing the potential consequences—not just a spectacular personal embarrassment for the President, but also the erosion of the Democrats' U.S. Senate margin from 57–43 to 56–44.

Bentsen's Democratic replacement, moderate former congressman and state Railroad Commissioner Bob Krueger, is sure to make the runoff, as why shouldn't he? He was named to the job by Governor Ann Richards, the party's favorite good ole gal. He's the only major Democrat in the race, if you exclude Richard Fisher of Dallas, a sometime Perot advisor who is financing his own campaign. Not least, Krueger by early April had banked $3 million in campaign contributions.

Yet the most recent poll, announced April 16, shows Krueger with voter support of just 25 per cent, against a combined 38 per cent for three Republicans: State Treasurer Kay Hutchison (17 per cent) and U.S. Congressmen Jack Fields of the Houston suburbs (14 per cent) and Joe Barton of Ennis (7 per cent). Independents come down in nearly equal numbers for Krueger, Hutchison, and Fields.

Maybe it's not fair to set up as a test case for the Clinton Administration a senatorial election taking place just three and a half months after the inauguration. Yet as an earlier Democratic President, John F. Kennedy, observed, "Life isn't fair."

Krueger is firmly harnessed to the President, who has pleaded with Texans to keep this valuable public servant working for America. From Krueger's standpoint, this can't be all to the good. Bill Clinton of Arkansas isn't exactly a hero to his next-door neighbors. He didn't carry Texas last year—quasi native son George Bush did. (Bona-fide native son Ross Perot got 22 per cent of the vote.) More ominously, a Texas Poll this February showed Clinton with Lone Star State approval ratings of just 27 per cent. Richard Nixon ranked higher in 1973, as the Watergate inquisitors closed in.

The poll on Clinton was taken just after his gaffe in publicizing—before he had uttered more than a few sentences about economics—his desire to open the military to professed, practicing homosexuals. Whoo boy! Texas, despite the sociological revolution of the past thirty years, is strongly pro-military, with a large population of retired military personnel. Suffice it to say that the President's initiative was not kindly received.

Meanwhile, it is necessary to talk of Ross Perot. If Perot ran third in Texas,

Mr. Murchison is a columnist for the Dallas Morning News.

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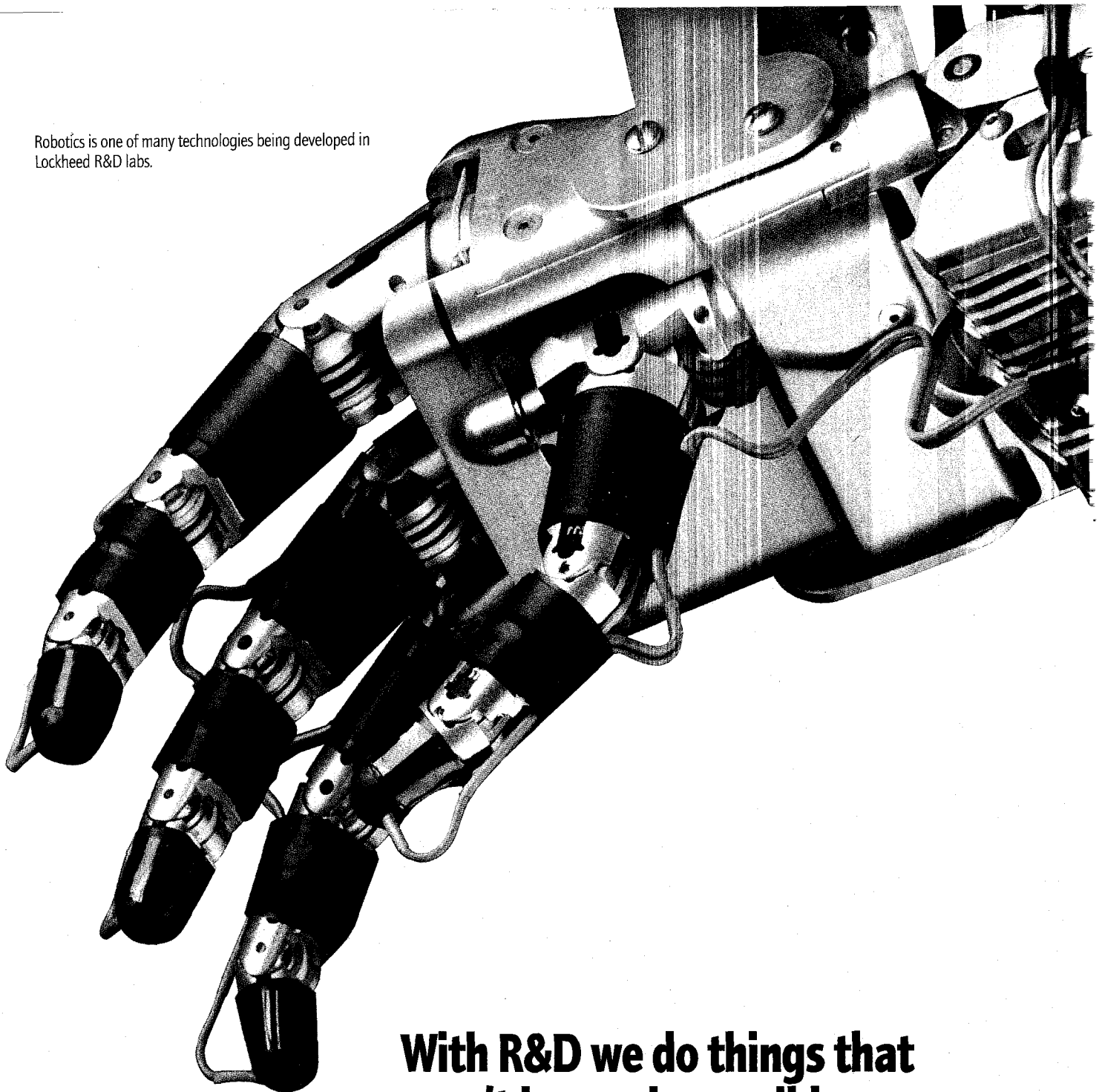

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it was hardly because Texans do not value his injunction to clean out the government barn. The famous Perot twang, down here, sounds normal, neighborhoody. But his appeal stems mostly from the congruence of his arguments with engrained Texas skepticism about federal meddling.

The appeal of Perot's United We Stand, though it hasn't rubbed off on Richard Fisher, is clear from the candidates' embrace of the organization, or at least of its positions. Joe Barton claims to be the group's first congressional member. More to the point, the major candidates—Krueger included—all have harsh things to say about government spending. Indeed, Krueger voted against final passage of the Senate budget resolution. "When additional waste in government spending is eliminated," the senator explained, "I will consider tax increases, but not before."

There is a complicating factor not of the President's manufacture. On the same May 1 ballot as the senatorial candidates appears a proposed state constitutional amendment that would allow redistribution of locally raised property-tax revenues from allegedly wealthy to allegedly poor school districts; the amendment would also necessitate large tax increases in most districts, whatever their financial status. The legislative leadership's main purpose in putting such a measure before the voters seems transparent—to whip up sentiment for a personal income tax, as a replacement for painful property taxes. An income tax would further centralize state funding, and open to cash-hungry legislators a mother lode of new revenues.

The amendment, nicknamed "Robin Hood," has aroused bitter opposition. Will it entice to the polls more mad conservatives than would otherwise have voted? Probably not—but it will make them madder when they show up.

By contrast, Democrats don't seem terribly enthusiastic about Robin Hood *or* Krueger. Krueger is to public speaking what skim milk is to Mexican cooking. No rhetorical Tabasco sauce for the gentleman from Texas: just bland, earnest words, reflecting a general blandness of outlook.

How does the land lie over in Republican territory? The contours keep changing. In this, the Year after the Year of the Woman, Kay Hutchison seemed early on to embody a new paradigm for the future: a woman highly sensitive to women's issues, but also tough on taxes and spending. (And tough in other ways as well: a former employee, a daughter of ex-Governor John Connally, recently went public with a personal account of working for Mrs. Hutchison: she says her boss, in a rage, struck her repeatedly with a notebook.)

But all of a sudden here comes Jack Fields, whom that April 16 polls showed surging to a near deadlock with Mrs. Hutchison. Fields is putting back together, piece by piece, the Reagan coalition: businessmen, independents, "Reagan Democrats," social conservatives. Fields's outreach to working-class conservatives may have served him especially well. The Hutchison camp overlaps the Bush wing of the Republican Party—affluent, well educated, socially more liberal than Fields's (and Reagan's) people. And Barton's near-dissappearance from the radar screen may stem from his comparative lack of focus on economics: no-gays-in-the-military is the issue with which he is most closely identified; by itself it's not enough.

It may be unfair to overemphasize differences among the Republican candidates, who agree with each other 90 per cent of the time. Their audience's receptiveness to conservative positions stands out in relief against Bill and Hillary's attempts to obliterate the Reagan Eighties. The only out-and-out left-winger in the cause is the Hispanic José Angel Gutierrez.

If Texas is a sample of the America Bill and Hillary hope to make over in their own image, why, about all one can say to this self-absorbed pair is, good luck. □

Tactical Retreat

VIN WEBER

WASHINGTON, D.C.

SOON AFTER taking office, President Clinton announced his intention to cut the U.S. defense budget dramatically. But when he finally released his first defense budget on March 27, the deep cuts expected in Reagan/Bush–era weapons programs hadn't materialized. "What we're doing is kind of treading water," said Defense Secretary Les Aspin.

What happened? Why did the Administration release what it termed a "holding budget" instead of going ahead with the cuts?

The stated reason was to conduct a "bottom-up" strategic review of U.S. defense needs in the post–Cold War era. But the real reason was nothing so noble—as evidenced by a confidential memo written for Aspin by Frank Wisner, an assistant defense secretary designate. "The major goal," Wisner wrote, "is to establish a broad, stable political consensus" for the cuts—i.e., to sell the cuts to an outraged Pentagon and conservative Democrats in Congress.

President Clinton was already unpopular with the military for his decision to allow open homosexuals into their ranks. Now the deep cuts he proposed—cuts of $122 billion over four years, twice as much as he had suggested on the campaign trail—had opened yet another wound. Colin Powell, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, came out publicly against his Commander-in-Chief's plan, calling it "fundamentally flawed," and stating "the forces and capabilities it proposes are unbalanced." The uproar led Wisner to warn Aspin in his secret memo that the Joint Chiefs "can only be moved so fast . . . too quick a pace will make them, and the chairman, balk."

Conservative Democrats in both houses of Congress also went on a very public and vocal campaign against the cuts. Senator Sam Nunn (D., Ga.), chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, led the charge. Appearing on NBC's *Meet the Press*, Nunn stated outright, "We're moving too rapidly." And on CNN's *Newsmaker Saturday*, he complained: "We have been dealing with numbers grabbed out of the air. No one knows where all these cuts are going to come from . . . "

His House counterpart, Representa-

Mr. Weber, the former congressman from Minnesota, is co-founder of the conservative group Empower America.

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Clinton at the White House, McCurdy told the President point blank: "Unless you slow down the tempo of operations we're going to have a hollow force by this time next year."

Nunn and McCurdy were making a lot of noise. But how much support did they have among their colleagues? Senate Republicans quickly offered a test, in the form of an amendment limiting reductions in Pentagon spending.

The Clinton lobbying team went into full swing. According to one senior Pentagon official, Aspin "bust[ed] his butt and some of ours" to shore up wavering support for the Clinton cuts. The lobbying worked. While Nunn and three colleagues crossed the aisle to vote with the Republicans, the Administration succeeded in making the vote a question of party loyalty, and thus defeated the measure 58 to 41.

But the victory was a hollow one, reflecting not so much support for the Clinton plan as the willingness of Senate Democrats to support their President in one of his first legislative battles. Lest the Administration misread the vote, Nunn fired two shots across the Clinton bows. He introduced two non-binding "Sense of the Senate" resolutions, one making it harder to use additional Pentagon cuts to pay for new spending; a second calling on the Administration to restore defense funds if savings anticipated from low inflation and cuts in federal salaries fail to materialize. The resolutions both passed by strong margins, the second by a mile-wide vote of 69 to 30.

Faced with such strong opposition, Clinton backed down, and Aspin made his announcement of the "holding" budget. Seemingly Nunn, McCurdy, and Powell had won their point, and Aspin had agreed that cuts had to be based on a real review of defense needs in the post–Cold War era.

But the Administration's retreat was a tactical one putting off the battle for another day. As the Wisner memo indicates, the real goal of the strategic review is not to assess U.S. defense needs, but to establish a consensus for the cuts. The review seems likely to be driven, not by the needs of our national defense, but by the needs of Clinton's budget.

Bill Clinton has staked the success of his Presidency on his economic plan. And the President is counting on defense cuts to pay for 85 per cent of that plan. He can't get the money from further taxes instead. He is already raising taxes to pay for his stimulus. And when his health-care plan is announced, he will have to raise taxes again to pay for that. Even Bill Clinton knows he can't raise taxes three times in one year. That leaves deeper cuts in domestic spending, which are not likely. The question of defense cuts is thus not "if" but "how."

Bonnie Gardner

The irony is that a real strategic review is desperately needed. In recent weeks, we've learned what a dangerous place the post–Cold War world may be: North Korea may be on the verge of assembling nuclear weapons; South Africa announced it had secretly assembled nuclear weapons in the 1980s; a *New Yorker* exposé revealed that, in 1990, India and Pakistan were on the verge of actually waging a regional nuclear war; and events in Moscow give rise to fears that the former USSR's nuclear arsenal could one day fall into the hands of authoritarian leaders.

Clearly, it is necessary to determine what our emerging national-security needs are, and then decide how to deal with those needs.

But, the Clinton approach to our national defense goes the other way around—first determining the Administration's fiscal and political needs, and then deciding our military preparedness based on what's left. Our national security may already be a casualty of Clinton's economic war on the American people. □

Family Values

JOHN R. COYNE JR.

CHICAGO

MUDVILLE, hell. On opening day, Wrigley Field had the corner on lack of joy.

In the stands it was cold, a grey damp day with the wind blowing from the Northeast across the lake. If you're a haunch of beef, it's a marvelous natural cooling system. Otherwise you sit huddled in your inadequate game getup, reminiscing about such things as winter at the Chosin Reservoir.

Nor did the game proceed as planned. The opponent was the Atlanta Braves, and their starting pitcher was Greg Maddux, last year's Cy Young Award winner, who had left the Cubs in the off season. And scheduled to throw out the first ball was Hillary Rodham Clinton, leading many to expect a cameo appearance by Jane Fonda Turner.

In anticipation, a plane circled the stadium, trailing a huge banner that read: "Hillary, throw the ball, not the lamp." But because of her father's illness, Mrs. Clinton was forced to cancel out, and fans neither saw Mrs. Turner nor learned whether the First Lady could throw like a boy.

But it was probably just as well. Political people at sporting events are fair game for hecklers. For instance, five days later, on a sparkling Friday, Carol Moseley Braun, who threw out the first ball at the White Sox opener—and threw it like a girl—was roundly booed by a sell-out crowd.

But at Wrigley Field, more experienced politicians had the good sense to keep their presence quiet. Of course, there were giveaways. You knew the bulky man with the roast-pork-and-beer look sharing a section with a shivering and dyspeptic Governor Jim Edgar was Representative Dan Rostenkowski. You knew this because some fans sitting nearby were chanting, "Send Danny to Jail."

You also knew who wasn't there. Some, like Carol Moseley Braun, prob-

Mr. Coyne works for a major corporation in Chicago.

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ably weren't there because Mrs. Clinton wasn't. In the case of the best known no-show—Mayor Daley—perhaps the reason was the striking parallel between the mayor's current political situation and the situation on the field.

"It wasn't much fun pitching out there today," said Maddux, who was booed when introduced, booed when he came to bat, and booed when he left with a shutout after 8⅓ innings.

Why the dislike? During the off-season, the Cubs made Maddux an offer—$27.5 million over five years. But after loudly professing his love for Chicago, he suddenly ran off to Atlanta—to Ted Turner and Jane Fonda, of all people—for only $500,000 more. What he did, in short, was to *jilt* the city.

CHICAGOANS feel they've been slighted. This feeds that thin-edged paranoia which represents the flip side of the garrulous amiability and genuine hospitality that characterizes this city.

And that is why the Mayor would have been booed on opening day. Like Maddux, the Mayor has decided to move.

It became official four days before the Cubs' opener, on April Fool's Day. Standing on Dearborn Street in the combined wind, sleet, rain, and snow of a typical Chicago spring day, reviewing a parade by Assyrians, surely one of the unluckiest people on earth, Mayor Daley told reporters that rumors of his impending move out of Bridgeport—where his family had lived for a hundred years, and which had supplied every mayor for sixty years, except for the brief interregnum of Byrne, Washington, and Sawyer—were true.

This, to put it mildly, was a bombshell—as if, one commentator put it, Queen Elizabeth were to announce she was moving out of Buckingham Palace. Moreover, the neighborhood to which he is moving, Central Station in Burnham Park, is one of those new upscale developments along the South Loop lakefront. As the *Chicago Tribune*'s John Kass put it, "To move from his Southwest Side neighborhood would mean leaving his tribe to live with the Yuppies."

True, Bridgeport is no longer a white ethnic stronghold where women scrub the sidewalks and the steps of their bungalows. Today, it is also a neighborhood of Asians and Hispanics, where gang members are spotted with increasing frequency.

Nor is the Mayor himself viewed as the reincarnation of his sainted father. As evidence of infidelity, the Mayor's Bridgeport constituents point to his proposal to increase property taxes, his enforcement of affirmative-action hiring practices for police officers and firefighters, and his emphasis on privatization, the antithesis of good ward political practice.

As Patrick L. Meade—himself a product of Bridgeport, and one of LaSalle Street's most respected investment brokers—puts it: "There's a perception on the part of people in the neighborhoods that he's going out of his way to curry favor with the trendy new Clinton constituencies, while ignoring the Reagan Democrats whose families were at the core of his father's political base. This move just confirms those suspicions."

"It is a family decision," the Mayor said gloomily of the move, as the Assyrians slogged by. "I value my role as a father and husband first and foremost, and this is strictly a family decision."

No doubt. The Mayor, like his father before him, *is* a family man, and a very good one indeed. Moreover, one suspects that his wife, a charming and stylish lady, may be just a bit tired of living in a cramped and dowdy century-old bungalow. And the new neighborhood is closer to their daughter's school.

But politics and family values sometimes intersect, and what may be good for the Mayor's family may just also prove to be good for the Mayor politically. And midway into his first full term, Daley needs political help.

When Daley consolidated his position in 1991 with 71 per cent of the vote, it seemed to many here that he had been elected Mayor for Life. But some of the bloom has rubbed off the rose bush.

Much of the problem is his own fault. He has hit an unsuspecting public with a series of major policy initiatives—a third airport, a third runway at O'Hare, theme-park gambling casinos. In the case of casinos, Daley demanded that they be land-based, while the governor opposes gambling in general and land-based casinos in particular. On each of the initiatives, Daley has either flip-flopped, dropped the idea altogether, or shifted positions unexpectedly. On casinos, for example, he has suddenly decided that he'd favor putting them "on aircraft carriers as big as City Hall and the County building."

With both Wisconsin and Indiana voters turning down casino gambling, the issue is losing luster here. However, Daley desperately needs additional sources of revenue. The city is locked into exorbitant union contracts, and the Chicago Teachers Union is demanding that the city live up to its promised 7 per cent salary increase. In the past, negotiations always went down to the wire, with Governor Jim Thompson and the Mayor coming up with a sleight-of-hand last-minute deal that provided enough money to buy the teachers off.

But Jim Edgar is not Jim Thompson. He doesn't play the game, and Daley has often seemed to go out of his way to pick fights with him.

A citywide teachers' strike this summer could be a political killer. But the Mayor has until 1995 for damage control or for a shift in direction.

Some believe that this is precisely what he has in mind, and that his move is the first step in a campaign to broaden his political base. This would certainly be easier to do away from the Bungalow Belt, preferably from one of those lakeshore high rises that are slowly replacing the ethnic enclaves that once gave Chicago its heart.

THE cliché is that all politics are local. In Chicago, up to now, all city politics have been tribal. The Mayor has been a tribal chieftain, dispensing favors, guaranteeing protection, living the life of the tribe. But Richard M. Daley has chosen to break with that tradition, and to many of his followers, that break is tantamount to changing his name to Richard M. Lamerding.

In his splendid autobiography, *Memoirs of a Dissident Publisher*, Henry Regnery told of a conversation with Karl Jaspers: "He wanted to know about Chicago, which someone told him was not a city at all, but a large village. I told him it was a collection of villages."

Perhaps that's no longer true. Or perhaps it will be true until the Cubs leave Wrigleyville or—as one would have said until very recently—until the Mayor leaves Bridgeport. □

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Anita Hill v. Clarence Thomas

HER WORD AGAINST HIS

Is it really just a case of which one you believe? Others testified as well, and the two antagonists' testimonies can be examined for internal consistency. Herewith, a sampling of David Brock's analysis.

DAVID BROCK

OBSERVERS of the Clarence Thomas–Anita Hill hearings came away concluding that one of the two—if not both—had lied about whether or not Mr. Thomas had sexually harassed Miss Hill. But no one could be confident that they would ever know who. The absence of documentary evidence turned the hearings into a fascinating but ultimately unsatisfying exercise in speculation on what someone like Miss Hill or Mr. Thomas *would* or *would not* have done. Thus the event would be characterized, forevermore, as a case of her word against his.

Yet the truth about whose word was more believable could have been found: it lay in comparing what they *said* they did with the accounts of other witnesses and various third parties. Clarence Thomas's testimony was fully corroborated by other parties. At this writing, no aspect of his statement has been challenged, in any way by anyone, before, during, or after the hearings—except in Anita Hill's own testimony. When her testimony is scrutinized in a similar fashion, at numerous points where her word can be checked against someone else's or with a written record, her sworn testimony and public statements either conflict with the facts or omit certain incidents entirely.

Why Did She Follow Him?

THE question to which the committee devoted more time and attention than any other was why Anita Hill decided to follow Clarence Thomas to the EEOC in May 1982 after he had allegedly sexually harassed her while she worked for him at the Department of Education. For Clarence Thomas's supporters, her decision to follow her victimizer was said to be so incomprehensible that it undermined the entire case that she had been harassed. For Miss Hill's supporters, on the other hand, her move to the EEOC was a symbol of her essential powerlessness. Many victims of harassment, they contended, cannot sacrifice their jobs simply to escape their harassers.

Such speculation about how a typical sexual-harassment victim would have—or should have—behaved obscured the only relevant question: whether Anita Hill had told the truth about her own decision to go to the EEOC. In the opening round of Miss Hill's testimony, Chairman Biden broached the topic:

> BIDEN: Can you describe to us how it was that you came to move over to the EEOC with Judge Thomas?
> HILL: Well, my understanding of—I did not have much notice that Judge Thomas was moving over to the EEOC. My understanding from him at that time was that I could go with him to the EEOC, that I did not have—since I was his special assistant, that I did not have a position at the Office for Education, but that I was welcome to go with him to the EEOC.

In the Federal Government a career—or Schedule A—employee cannot be fired without cause, unlike a political—or Schedule C—employee. Anita Hill had Schedule A status throughout her government career. Yet when challenged by Senator Arlen Specter, she denied knowing that she had had a career position.

> SPECTER: Professor Hill, did you know that, as a Class A attorney, you could have stayed on at the Department of Education?

Mr. Brock is an investigative reporter for The American Spectator. *This piece is excerpted from his new book,* The Real Anita Hill: The Untold Story, *© 1993 by David Brock. Reprinted by permission of the Free Press, a division of Macmillan, Inc.*

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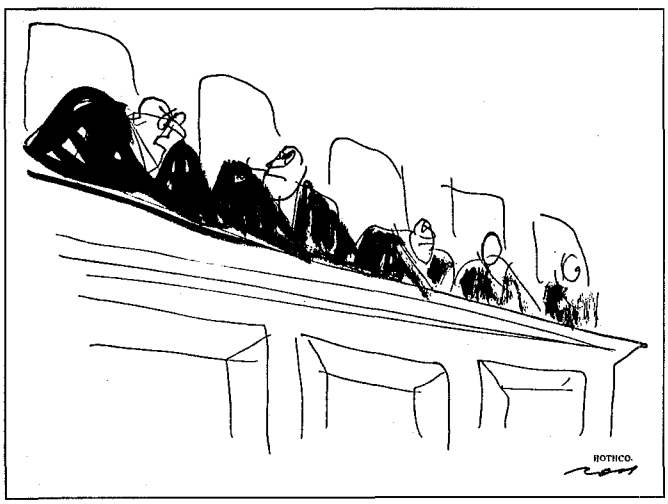
HILL: No, I did not know at that time.
SPECTER: Did you make an inquiry of his successor, Mr. Singleton, as to what your status would be?
HILL: No, I did not. I'm not even sure that I knew who his successor would be at that time.

At a subsequent point, Senator Leahy pursued the same line of questioning in an effort to help Miss Hill



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"Speak for yourself, Beckmeyer, and stop saying, 'We're all guilty of something.*'"*

by placing responsibility for her ignorance about her job status on officials of the Education Department.

LEAHY: Now, did anybody tell you that you could stay and have a job at the Department of Education?
HILL: Nobody told me that.

Was it possible that a Yale-educated lawyer would not know whether she was a career employee with job security, or a political appointee whose job would end if Mr. Thomas left the department? According to Phyllis Berry-Myers, who worked at Education and at the EEOC during the same period, it was not.

A new employee would know whether their employment is classified as permanent or temporary, protected or nonprotected, and those kinds of things. Each new employee must sign a form that contains such information, before employment can begin.

The document prepared on Anita Hill's first day of employment specified "career tenure."

The strongest evidence refuting Miss Hill's version of the circumstances surrounding her job change came from two people who, because of time pressures, were never called to testify before the Judiciary Committee.

Andrew Fishel was the head of the personnel office in the civil-rights division of the Department of Education during Miss Hill's tenure there. In an interview, he said that when she arrived at the department in late August 1981, he personally briefed her on her status as a Schedule A attorney. A year later, in 1982, Mr. Fishel continued, "we also had a discussion just prior to her leaving and going over to the EEOC. . . . She told me she was going over as a Schedule A. She said she liked being a Schedule A because she was not subject to dismissal. . . . She said she was personally and professionally flattered to be going with Thomas, that it was a great career move. She showed no hesitancy."

Similarly, Harry Singleton, Clarence Thomas's successor at Education, flatly and angrily contradicted Miss Hill's sworn testimony on several points. According to Mr. Singleton, Miss Hill not only knew that he was Mr. Thomas's replacement—which she denied in her sworn testimony—but also turned down his offer to stay at Education in the same post she had had under Clarence Thomas. Mr. Singleton said in an interview: "I talked to Anita a number of times. You know, we both went to Yale, and it is a small network, so we talked. Clarence had made it clear to me that he was taking Diane Holt with him. I didn't want to be left without any staff, so I asked Anita if she was going to stay. But she said, 'Oh no, I'm going with Clarence.' She was lying to the committee."

Here is what Diane Holt, Mr. Thomas's secretary and one of Miss Hill's friends, had to say:

HOLT: I didn't think there was any indecision on her part. We were both enthusiastic about going to EEOC.
HATCH: She was enthusiastic?
HOLT: She was.
HATCH: Well, wasn't that, though, because she wanted to serve in this particularly stronger civil-rights area?
HOLT: We discussed that this man was a rising star and we wanted to be there with him.
HATCH: But wasn't that just you feeling that way?
HOLT: No, that was her feeling that way also.

If the statements of Phyllis Berry-Myers, Andrew Fishel, Harry Singleton, and Diane Holt are correct, a portrait of Miss Hill entirely different from the one she presented of herself emerges. With full knowledge of her right to stay on at Education—and in spite of the expressed desire of Mr. Thomas's successor that she remain with him—she willingly, and even eagerly, accompanied Mr. Thomas to the EEOC.

Did She Stay in Touch?

ANOTHER major area of inquiry was the nature and extent of the contacts that Anita Hill maintained with Clarence Thomas after leaving the EEOC in 1983. The major evidence was contained in his old telephone logs. The logs showed that Miss Hill had left ten telephone messages for Mr. Thomas from 1983 to 1991:

Jan. 31, 1984, 11:50 A.M. "Just called to say hello. Sorry she didn't get to see you last week."
May 8, 1984, 11:40 A.M. "Pls. call."
Aug. 29, 1984, 3:59 P.M. "Needs your advice on getting research grants."
Aug. 30, 1984, 11:55 A.M. "Returned your call" (call btwn 1 & 4).
Jan. 3, 1985, 3:40 P.M. "Pls. call tonight." [On this message, Miss Hill left the phone for her hotel in Washington, the Embassy Row Hotel, and her room number.]
Feb. 26, 1985, 5:50 P.M. "Pls. call."
March 4, 1985, 11:15 A.M. "Pls. call re: research project."
July 5, 1985, 1:30 P.M. "Pls. call."
Oct. 8, 1986, 12:25 P.M. "Pls. call."

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Aug. 4, 1987, 4 P.M. "In town 'til 8/15. Wanted to congratulate on marriage." [Miss Hill left the telephone number of friend Keith Henderson's residence.]
Nov. 1, 1990, 11:40 A.M. "Re speaking engagement at University of Oklahoma Law School."

When approached for comment by Ruth Marcus of the *Washington Post* three days before she was to testify, Miss Hill was quoted as calling the logs "garbage," evidently meaning to imply that they had been falsified. She asserted that she had not telephoned Mr. Thomas at all, except to return his calls. "If there are messages to him from me, these are attempts to return telephone calls. I never called him to say hello. I found out about his marriage through a third party. I never called him to congratulate him," she told the *Post*.

Unbeknownst to Miss Hill, however, Diane Holt always noted in the log whether the contact was an attempt to return a call or not. Contrary to Miss Hill's characterization, only *one* of the ten messages showed that she was returning a call from Mr. Thomas.

By Friday in her testimony, when Senator Specter pressed her on the subject, she denied having told the *Post* that she had only been returning Mr. Thomas's calls. She now conceded initiating some of them but said that they had all been made "in a professional context. . . . None of them were personal in nature." In order to account for those messages that appeared to be more personal than professional, she testified that she had been calling Diane Holt, not Clarence Thomas.

> I knew his secretary, Diane Holt. We had worked together both at EEOC and Education. There were occasions on which I spoke to her, and on some of these occasions, undoubtedly, I passed on some casual comment to then Chairman Thomas. . . .

But Miss Holt later testified that Anita Hill had called Mr. Thomas on those occasions, not her. If any of the calls had been personal ones made to her, they would never have gone into the log. Miss Holt's testimony also revealed that Miss Hill had called Mr. Thomas on at least a half-dozen other occasions not reflected in the log. The only calls logged in were those on which the caller did not reach Mr. Thomas on the first try. If the call was put through, it was not logged.

In addition to the phone logs, there was evidence that Miss Hill had personal contact with Mr. Thomas in 1987, when he traveled to Tulsa to give a speech. He stayed at the home of Charles Kothe, the former dean of the Oral Roberts law school, where Miss Hill had taught after leaving the EEOC. Miss Hill had breakfast at Mr. Kothe's home with Clarence Thomas on the morning of his departure, and then drove him to the airport.

When Senator Specter asked why she would have agreed to drive her victimizer to the airport, Miss Hill—evidently aware that having done so compromised her efforts to make herself appear as a victim—removed the voluntary element from the story. She maintained that she had only driven him to the airport because Mr. Kothe had asked her to, implying that she was placed in a rather awkward position but did not want to embarrass anyone by objecting.

The important test of credibility was whether Anita Hill had told the truth about *being asked* to drive Mr. Thomas to the airport. Mr. Kothe addressed this point in a later interview:

> She suggested the night before that she drive Thomas to the airport. She was very proud of her new car, and she wanted to show him. That's why she was at our home so early in the morning for breakfast. It wasn't as if it was a formal breakfast where she happened to be invited and then drive him to the airport. . . . She came to take him to the airport.

There were several other instances where Miss Hill attempted to downplay her continued connections to Mr. Thomas after leaving the EEOC. In her press conference at Oklahoma University on October 7, the day after the story of her charges against Mr. Thomas broke, one reporter pursued the question of Miss Hill's role in the recent speaking invitation extended to Mr. Thomas by the OU law school.

> Q. Did you invite him to speak at the university?
> A. No, I did not invite him. The enrichment committee sent an official letter to him inviting him. The chairman of that committee came to me and said would you follow up and see, make sure he's gotten that letter and that he's going to pay some attention to it.
>
> At that time, I stated very clearly to the chairman of the committee that I did not want him to come here. And I however did make a phone call and spoke mainly to his secretary saying have you got this letter, and they really would like him to come.

The Thomas phone-log entry in reference to that call is dated November 1, 1990. However, the letter inviting Mr. Thomas to speak, signed by Associate Professor Kevin Saunders, which Miss Hill said she was "following up," was dated January 31, 1991, three months *after* her phone call, and it began: "I am writing to follow up on your earlier conversation with my colleague, Professor Anita Hill, and invite you to deliver a lecture as part of the Enrichment Program at the University of Oklahoma Law School." Miss Hill misstated the sequence of these contacts, possibly to obscure her own role in inviting Mr. Thomas to the campus.

Why did Miss Hill deny these contacts and connections? She may have had perfectly legitimate reasons for staying in touch with Mr. Thomas and leading others to believe that nothing was amiss between them. But she must have calculated, either on her own or with her advisors and attorneys, that she would make for a more compelling and credible witness if she simply denied the contacts.

Anita Hill's Svengali

ANOTHER major problem emerged in Miss Hill's account of her contacts with Senate staff. She plainly preferred not to let the committee know about the "carrot and stick" strategy by which Jim Brudney of Senator Metzenbaum's Labor Committee staff alternately pressured and coaxed her into filing

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her statement. If she had revealed his role, her own acquiescence in a plan to defeat the Thomas nomination in secret would have come into full public view.

Thus she was deceptive when Senator Specter closely questioned her about an account in *USA Today*, in which her friend Keith Henderson had said that she was told by Senate staffers that if she made the charge "quietly and behind the scenes," Thomas might be induced to withdraw.

SPECTER: But was there any suggestion, however slight, that the statement with these serious charges would result in a withdrawal so that it wouldn't have to be necessary for your identity to be known or for you to come forward under circumstances like these?
HILL: There was—no, not that I recall. I don't recall anything being said about him being pressed to resign.

A few moments later:

SPECTER: Well, . . . any suggestion that just the charges themselves, in writing, would result in Judge Thomas withdrawing, going away?
HILL: No, no. Not that I recall.

Apparently, Miss Hill's first instinct—natural enough—was to deny anything that would have raised the question of whether she was attracted by the opportunity the staffers offered her to attack Mr. Thomas secretly without revealing herself or facing the potential consequences of coming forward and confronting her alleged victimizer. In the afternoon, however, unprompted by a question, she volunteered the following about her first conversation with Mr. Brudney in early September:

HILL: . . . in the course of our conversations, Mr. Brudney asked me what were specifics about what it was that I had experienced.

In addition, we talked about the process for going forward. What might happen if I did bring information to the committee. That included that an investigation might take place, that I might be questioned by the committee in closed session. It even included something to the effect that the information might be presented to the candidate or the White House. There was some indication that the candidate or, excuse me, the nominee might not wish to continue the process. . . .
SPECTER: So Mr. Brudney did tell you that Judge Thomas might not wish to continue to go forward with his nomination if you came forward?
HILL: Yes.

Miss Hill's conflicting statements on this question led Senator Specter to charge that had she not changed her testimony, the morning exchange would have constituted flat-out perjury. In the afternoon, after consulting with attorneys who may have advised her to correct the record precisely to avoid a perjury charge, Miss Hill reversed course and said that Mr. Brudney *had* told her Mr. Thomas might withdraw.

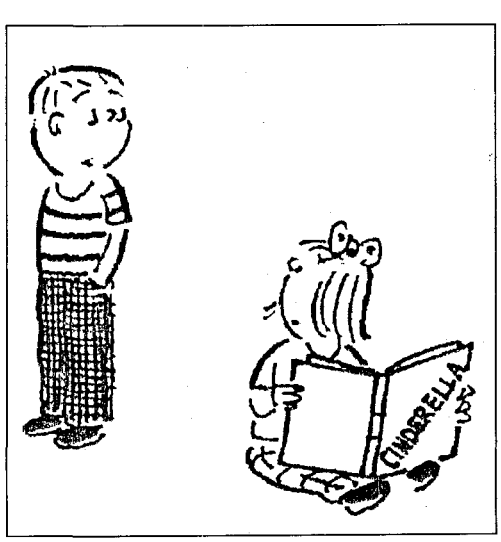
Under questioning, she concealed other facts regarding Mr. Brudney as well. Earlier she had been asked by Senator Leahy about her handling of the statement that she filed with the Judiciary Committee on September 23. During that exchange, Miss Hill omitted crucial information that would have implicated Mr. Brudney as the person who had leaked her statement to the media.

LEAHY: You faxed a copy to the committee, is that correct?
HILL: Yes.
LEAHY: You gave a copy to your counsel?
HILL: Yes.
LEAHY: Did you give a copy to anybody else?
HILL: No, they told me that they had received a copy from the committee. . . .
LEAHY: And so your counsel, the faxed copy and your own copy are the only ones that you had control of, is that correct?
HILL: Yes.

The report of special counsel Peter Fleming, released seven months later, stated that Miss Hill, after an extended discussion of why he needed it, had faxed a copy of her committee statement on September 25 to Jim Brudney, who subsequently appears to have leaked it to the press. Miss Hill withheld this information under oath.

The Weight of the Evidence

CONSIDERED separately, these and similar glitches do not seem terribly significant. Taken together, however, they raise serious questions about the consistency and credibility of her story. It is clear that the equal credibility granted to Anita Hill's word in relation to Clarence Thomas's by the Senate and the media is undeserved. By the time she had finished testifying, if one wanted to believe that she had told the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, one would have to believe that all of the other people who had offered conflicting testimony and evidence were incorrect, or simply lying—Diane Holt, Harry Singleton, Phyllis Berry-Myers, Andrew Fishel, Charles Kothe, Ruth Marcus of the *Washington Post*, and others whose statements are chronicled in the full version of this chapter as published in my book: John Doggett, Carlton Stewart, Stanley Grayson, Harriet Grant, Joe Biden, the two FBI agents, and all four of Anita Hill's own witnesses—Susan Hoerchner, John Carr, Allen Wells, and Joel Paul. Alternatively, all of these individuals could have been correct, and Anita Hill could have made more than a dozen false statements under oath. □



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"It's her version of events."

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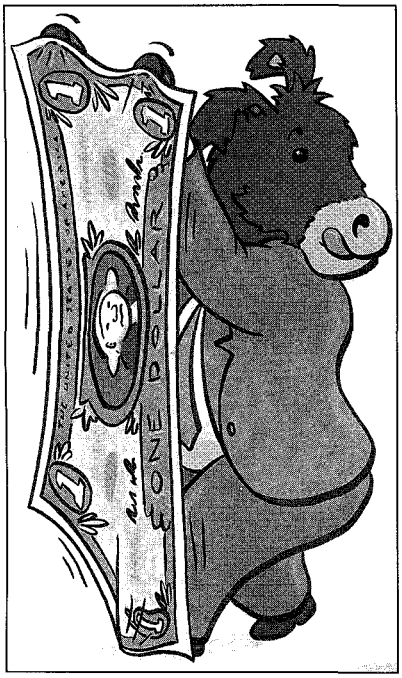

Facing the Deficit

NO TIME FOR GIMMICKS

Yes, there is 'waste, fraud, and abuse' to ferret out. But unless we—Left and Right alike—face up to the growing demands of federal entitlements, the deficit will grow till it eats us alive.

JOHN ATTARIAN

HOW BAD is the deficit, really, and how did we get to this point? The total deficit figures—the ones everyone uses, measuring the gap between total revenue and total expenditure—are frightening enough. But, as the General Accounting Office (GAO) has told Congress, they only partly measure the problem, since they include the mitigating trust-fund surpluses, especially Social Security's, which is off-budget. When we strip away the Social Security surplus, what emerges is downright appalling. The soaring size of the on-budget deficit, indicated as a percentage of on-budget revenue, shows how badly fiscal discipline has collapsed—despite (or because of) the tax increases of 1982, 1983, 1984, 1986, and 1990 (see Table 1, next page).

Gross interest on the debt, including interest on the Treasury debt in the Social Security and other trust-fund surpluses (which net interest subtracts), now claims over a third of on-budget revenue—something one associates with banana republics. As its share of spending has grown, it has become a force driving spending and deficits higher. That is, our deficits are feeding on themselves.

Some economists argue that on-budget-deficit and gross-interest figures exaggerate the problem. But we must remember that Social Security's surplus is an obligation of the Treasury, which it must ultimately meet with resources extracted from the private sector. As the GAO and others have warned, when Social Security eventually liquidates its surplus to pay benefits, the Treasury will have to pay that debt by taxing or borrowing from the public. The on-budget deficit measures the borrowing the Treasury does now; the real significance of the Social Security surplus is that it represents borrowing (or taxing) that the Treasury must do later.

As we are belatedly realizing, entitlement spending is the primary engine driving outlay growth; hence, it is the root of our deficit problem. It has been growing faster than the total budget and far faster than the economy, and now dominates total outlays (see Table 2, page 29).

'Spending Cut' Gimmicks

INSTEAD OF honestly confronting the entitlement crisis, President Clinton is ducking it. True to the liberal myth that Reagan's tax cuts and defense buildup caused the deficits, Clinton stresses tax increases and disarmament. And the result of punishing the Reagan "villains"? Projected deficits for 1994–97 total $1,241 billion. Clinton's plan—assuming it works—envisions net deficit reduction of $325 billion. This leaves $916 billion of deficits, averaging $229 billion a year, hardly better than Bush's 1989–92 average of $233.4 billion. The moral of this math: Entitlements are the real villains, Clinton isn't attacking them, and we won't achieve sound finance until we do.

Some of his "spending cuts" are sheer gimmicks. He claims cuts of $10.5 billion through eliminating 100,000 federal jobs. But bureaucratic expansion to administer his national-service, job-training, and job-creation programs, etc., will offset this.

He also claims cuts of $16.4 billion in interest costs by shifting from long-term to short-term Treasury securities. But flooding credit markets with short-term debt means greater demand for short-term credit, meaning higher short-term interest rates. So much for these savings.

Worse, this gimmick is pregnant with potential disaster. If new government borrowing uses short-term debt and if interest rates rise—and we can hardly expect short-term rates to remain low forever—we will be stuck rolling over massive amounts of increasingly costly short-term debt rather than having, as we do now, a substantial part of the next few years' borrowing in long-term securities with today's reasonable rates locked in. Interest costs will leap accordingly.

And when is a tax hike a spending cut? When Bill Clinton says it is. He calls the $29.2 billion in expected reve-

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nues from taxing Social Security benefits to the wealthy elderly a "spending cut." When Republican senators questioned him on this, Treasury Secretary Bentsen, who is old enough to know better, defended this legerdemain by arguing that the government is in effect taking back its benefits.

Unfortunately, in opposing Mr. Clinton, conservatives risk being seduced by their own gimmicks that attempt to deal with deficits without confronting what causes them.

TABLE 1
LURCHING TOWARD FISCAL CRISIS
Dollar amounts in billions; fiscal years
Note: 1993–98 dollar amounts are CBO estimates

	1981	1985	1989	1992	1993	1995	1998
On-budget Revenues	469	548	727	789	825	934	1,071
On-budget Outlays	543	770	933	1,129	1,186	1,285	1,516
On-budget Deficit	74	222	205	340	361	351	445
Total Deficit	79	212	152	290	310	284	357
Gross Federal Debt	994	1,817	2,868	4,003	4,392	5,189	6,524
Gross Interest	96	179	241	292	295	333	407
GDP	2,965	3,971	5,170	5,869	6,173	6,855	7,873
Shares of GDP							
On-budget Deficit	2.5%	5.6%	4.0%	5.8%	5.8%	5.1%	5.6%
Gross Federal Debt	33.5	45.8	55.5	68.2	71.1	75.7	82.9
Gross Interest	3.2	4.5	4.7	5.0	4.8	4.9	5.2
Share of On-Budget Revenues							
On-budget Deficit	15.8%	40.5%	28.2%	43.1%	43.8%	37.6%	41.5%
Gross Interest	20.5	32.7	33.1	37.0	35.8	35.7	38.0

Sources: Office of Management and Budget, Congressional Budget Office.

Conservative Nostrums

A WAR on waste and fraud is especially appealing; who likes waste? Ronald Reagan's Private Sector Survey on Cost Control (the Grace Commission) made hundreds of suggestions that would "cut over $424 billion in wasteful spending over three years," or so a mailing from J. Peter Grace that I received last year claimed. "*This plan could almost eliminate the entire federal deficit!* [his emphasis]." Perhaps this was so at the time the Grace Commission reported in the 1980s, when deficits were below $200 billion, but it is not remotely true now. Last July, Grace moderated his claims: eliminating waste would "reduce the cumulative 5-year deficit by $270 billion." The CBO projects $1,538 billion in deficits for 1994–98. If we saved Grace's $270 billion, 1994–98 deficits would total $1,268 billion—better, but still catastrophic.

That cutting waste is an evasion emerged when Grace's letter explicitly tried to sell a war on waste precisely because it *avoids* tough spending cuts:

> Are they painful cuts in social or defense programs?
>
> NO! [His capitals.] Our job was to cut waste. Our proposals don't cut program benefits.

Whatever the merits of eliminating waste it won't address the underlying problem of out-of-control entitlement spending. Nor will it affect the demographics of an aging population that spell the doom of Social Security and Medicare.

Other conservatives advocate the line-item veto—presidential authority to veto specific items in appropriations bills—as a wonder weapon of spending control. In the wake of Clinton's plan, calls for a line-item veto are rising again. Senator John McCain argues that while not a whole solution to the deficit, "there can be no answer without the line-item veto."

Unfortunately, this veto would apply only to discretionary spending. It wouldn't go where the trouble is: interest and entitlements, now gobbling over half the budget. Also, line-item cuts are by definition picayune: the endive research grant, the Lawrence Welk musuem. Last year's budget spent $1,381.8 billion; the deficit was $290.2 billion. We simply can't cope with things this big by chasing chicken feed.

Skepticism is also in order about another conservative favorite, a Balanced Budget Amendment (BBA), reintroduced in Congress February 4. Senator Orrin Hatch (R., Utah) declared, "Only the fiscal discipline of a balanced-budget amendment can return sanity to an out-of-control federal budget process." Alas, the BBA too is open to gimmickry.

Much depends on how the budget is defined. Social Security is already off-budget. Given Medicare's huge and exploding expense and its popularity, politicians would have compelling reasons to move it off-budget too, and could rationalize this by arguing that Medicare is partly financed with a trust fund. The increasingly likely bailout of pension insurance could be farmed out to off-budget enterprises, as the FSLIC bailout was. Thus a narrowly defined "budget" might be balanced, while off-budget the Treasury was bleeding to death.

Sure enough, last summer House Majority Leader Richard Gephardt endorsed the BBA idea, saying that "in these extraordinary times, extraordinary measures are required." But his version exempted Social Security from the budget to be balanced, "a far better, more thoughtful, and effective [*sic*] approach," he claimed, than Congressman Stenholm's proposed BBA. "No member of Congress . . . can posture as a friend of the elderly while voting against our amendment." So much for extraordinary measures.

Secondly, a BBA fosters the delusion that to say it is to get it done. The difference between BBA and a balanced budget is the difference between declaring a war and winning it. The latter requires the pain that we have so far evaded.

Congress's Attempt

CONGRESS'S own gimmick unfortunately remains popular among conservatives: Gramm–Rudman–Hollings (GRH), which was to balance the budget by 1991, using automatic spending cuts if its deficit targets were missed. Since former Reagan budget director James Miller has already proposed bringing such a scheme back, it's worth examining at length the failure of GRH.

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GRH exempted Social Security, veterans' benefits, Medicaid, AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children), WIC (Women, Infants, and Children), food stamps, and other entitlements from automatic cuts; it limited Medicare cuts. The 1987 revision of GRH exempted Social Security and poverty entitlements, and limited Medicare cuts to 2 per cent. The supposedly stern "across-the-board" cuts were confined to less than half the board, and not the half driving the deficits.

At first glance, late-Eighties deficit figures indicate success for GRH, but closer scrutiny reveals otherwise. Breaking down changes in the deficit into changes in revenues and expenditures reveals that the fall in the deficit from 1985 to 1989, and the particularly sharp fall in 1987, were due mostly to increases in revenues swamping the spending increases. The 1987 revenue surge combined the effects of Eighties economic growth with a one-time gain from the 1986 Tax Reform Act, which offset its rate cuts with a broader tax base by eliminating many deductions and tax shelters, and increasing corporate taxes. Revenue from personal income taxes rose $43.6 billion in 1987; corporate tax revenues rose another $20.8 billion. Also, the Social Security tax hikes voted in 1983 were yielding big revenue growth. When the recession shriveled revenue growth while spending kept soaring, deficits exploded again (see Table 3, page 32).

True, Norman Ture claims that "Contrary to the widespread assertion that it failed of its purpose, GRH was amazingly effective in slowing the growth of federal outlays," pointing out that in fiscal 1985–89, total outlays in real terms (1987 dollars) grew only 1.4 per cent a year, and even in current dollars only 4.86 per cent, versus 8.69 per cent in 1981–85. This restraint was good as far as it went. But Ture's argument claims too much. GRH *did* "fail of its purpose," which was not to slow the rate of spending growth but to gradually liquidate the deficit via specific deficit targets explicitly written into the law.

Only the 1987 target was met. When it became clear that the others wouldn't be, Congress simply loosened them (see Table 3, page 32). Even these limits were routinely evaded with shabby tricks like postponing paychecks, while Social Security surpluses masked growing on-budget deficits.

And even this modest restraint was too stern for Congress, which replaced GRH with the 1990 Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act. Alas, OBRA *yet again* flinched from confronting entitlements. The vaunted spending caps applied only to discretionary spending; Medicare could not be cut by more than 2 per cent to enforce a deficit target; Social Security was exempted from sequestration altogether. The supposedly tough pay-as-you-go entitlement limits applied only to new entitlements or expansions of existing ones; they did nothing to contain the mushrooming costs of current programs.

Bringing back Gramm–Rudman–Hollings, then, is no answer.

Growing Our Way Out

RATHER than take up their cross, some conservatives flee into a supply-side fantasy that economic growth will generate tax revenues sufficient to balance the budget, or at least reduce the deficit sharply, allowing them to skirt unpopular spending cuts.

The temptation to tout growth is understandable, given Clinton's painful tax strategy. Jack Kemp has already framed the issue as "Taxes vs. Growth," in the February 19 *New York Times*, and *Wall Street Journal* editor Robert Bartley is blithely crowing: "As for the dread deficit, with moderate spending restraint and good incentives, we can grow out of it" (*WSJ*, Feb. 24). But it is a delusion that growth alone can avert the oncoming fiscal crisis. Growth would help revenues, but not enough to cover runaway spending. As Norman Ture's figures demonstrate when examined from another angle, if you hold discretionary spending to little or no increase but fail to control entitlements at a time when they account for half of the budget, *total* spending will rise at a rate of almost 5 per cent annually.

Growth, moreover, depends on investment, investment depends on savings, and the savings just aren't there. Our gratification-oriented population is not only saving less and less as a share of national income, the deficit is guzzling more and more of those dwindling savings. In the 1960s, financing the deficit took roughly 2 per cent of national savings; in the 1970s, 19 per cent; in the 1980s, 48 per cent; and in 1990, the deficit

TABLE 2
GROWTH OF MAJOR ENTITLEMENTS
(Dollar amounts in billions; fiscal years)

	1965	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1992	% Growth
Social Security	17.1	29.6	63.6	117.1	186.4	246.5	285.1	1,567
Medicare	---	5.8	12.2	31.0	64.1	95.8	116.2	1,903
Medicaid	0.3	2.7	3.1	14.0	22.7	41.1	67.8	22,500
Federal Retirement	2.9	5.5	13.2	26.6	38.5	51.9	74.9	2,482
Veterans Benefits	4.3	6.6	12.5	14.0	15.9	15.9	16.0	272
Unemployment	2.3	3.1	12.8	16.9	15.8	17.1	37.0	1,509
Food & Nutrition	0.3	1.0	6.6	13.1	16.7	21.3	29.0	9,566
Supplemental Security	---	---	4.3	5.7	8.7	11.5	18.0	319
Family Support	2.8	4.1	5.1	7.3	9.2	12.2	16.0	471
Total Major Entitlements (MEs)	30.0	58.4	133.4	245.7	368.0	513.3	660.0	2,100
Total Outlays	118	196	332	591	946	1,252	1,382	1,148
Total MEs as % of Total Outlays	25.3%	29.9%	40.1%	41.6%	38.9%	41.0%	47.8%	89%
As % of GDP	4.5	5.9	8.8	9.3	9.3	9.4	11.2	149

Sources: Office of Management and Budget, Congressional Budget Office.

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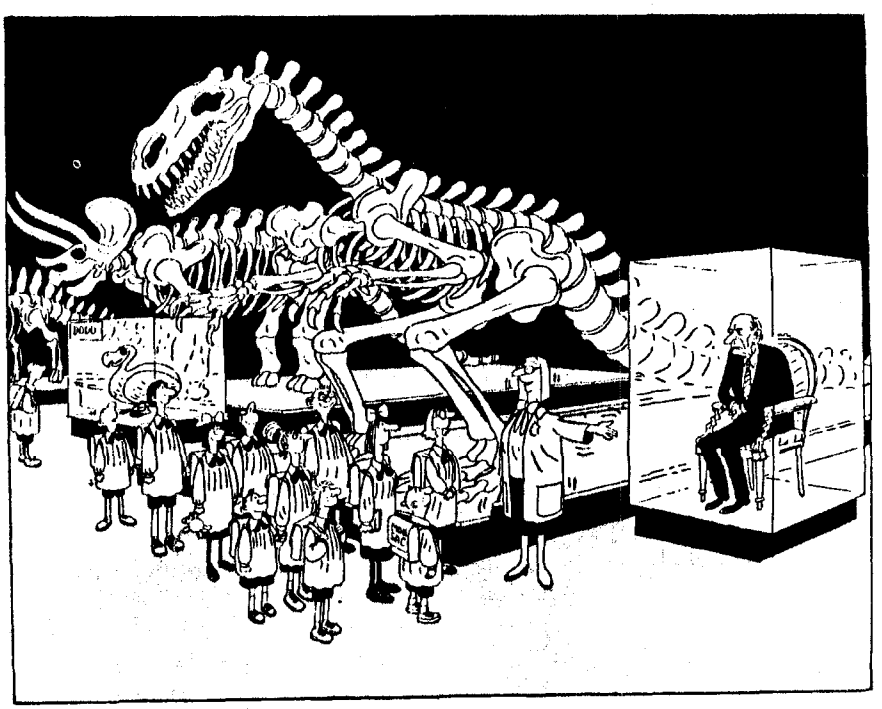
help

Clinton the Inconstant

From owls to gays to grazing fees,
When polls or other indices
Go sour, he turns negative
And hits supporters where they live;
Then Mr. Stephanopoulos
Spin-doctors the ensuing fuss.

W. H. VON DREELE

"Congress gave a $100-million grant to study why taxpayers are angry."



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"Regardez! Le dernier socialiste français."

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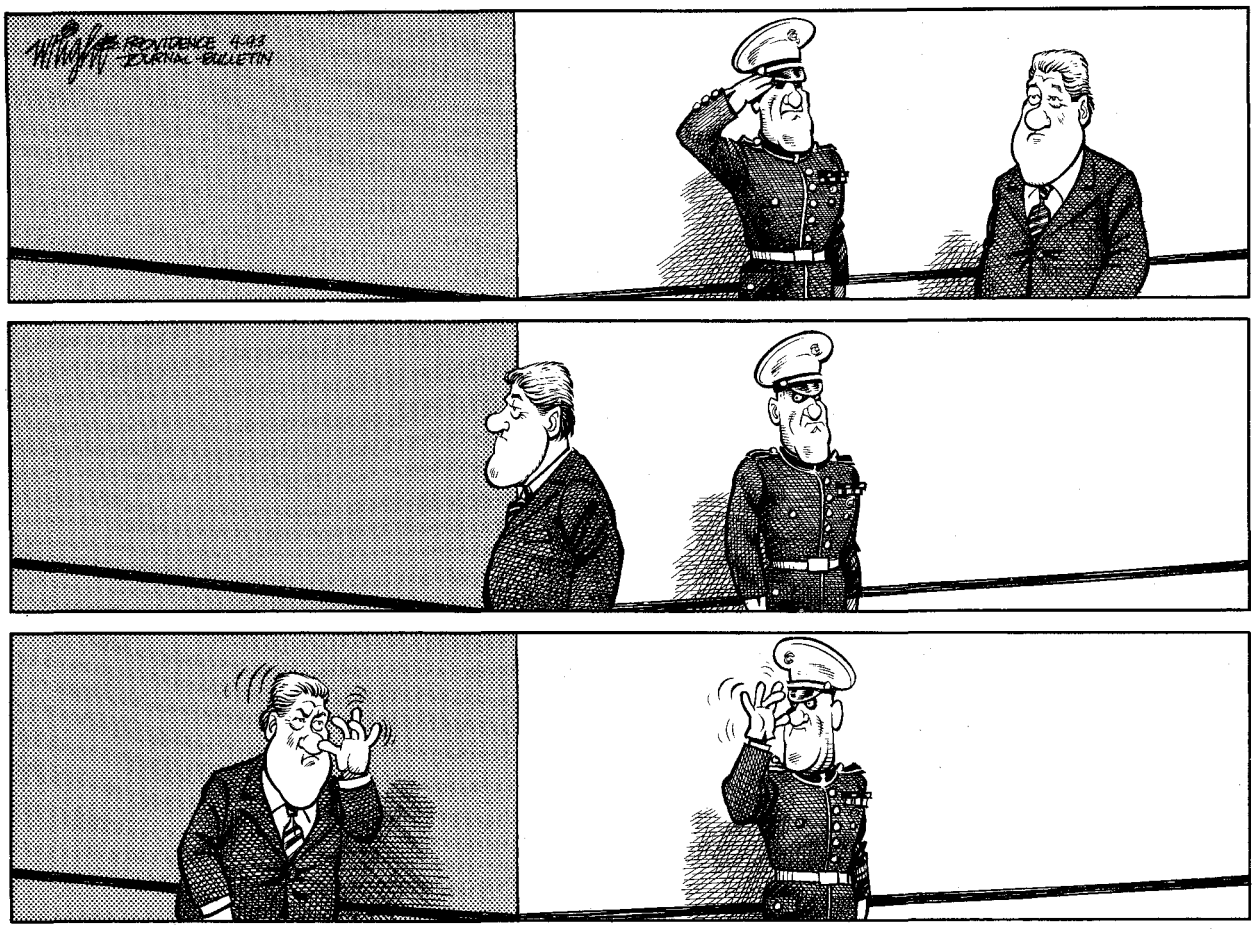

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TABLE 3
THE FAILURE OF GRAMM–RUDMAN–HOLLINGS
(Billions of Dollars)

	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
G-R-H 1 Deficit Target	172	144	108	72	36	0	
G-R-H 2 Deficit Target			144	136	100	64	28
Actual Total Deficit	221	150	155	154	221	269	290
On-Budget Deficit	238	169	194	206	277	321	340
Off-Budget Surplus	17	20	39	53	57	52	50
Changes from Previous Year							
On-Budget Spending	+37.3	+3.2	+51.4	+71.8	+93.5	+54.6	+47.7
Total Spending	+43.9	+13.6	+60.2	+80.0	107.6	+71.2	+58.0
Total Revenue	+35.0	+85.0	+54.8	+81.7	+40.6	+23.0	+37.3
Total Deficit	+8.9	–71.4	+5.4	+1.7	+67.0	+48.2	+20.7
Personal Income Tax	+14.5	+43.6	+8.6	+44.5	+21.2	+0.9	+8.7
Corporate Income Tax	+1.8	+20.8	+10.4	+9.0	–9.8	+4.6	+2.2
Social Insurance Tax	+18.7	+19.4	+31.0	+25.1	+20.6	+16.0	+17.7

Sources: *Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, 1985, 1987; OMB; CBO
Note: total revenues also includes excise taxes, estate & gift taxes, customs duties, etc.

gobbled 58 per cent. Net national savings—what's left of net private savings when public-sector deficits are subtracted—fell from 7.1 per cent of GNP in the 1970s to only 3.1 per cent in the 1980s, and more recently below 2.5 per cent. Is this sliver of GNP supposed to finance the investment for the supply-side growth miracle?

The Hour Is Late

THE PROBLEM is dire, the hour is late, and "moderate spending restraint" is not nearly enough. Even if more sensible economic policies *do* produce brisk economic growth, the revenue gain from growth is likely to be swamped by the needs of the entitlement programs.

In 1988, Peter Peterson and Neil Howe warned that entitlements would be unaffordable by 2000. They calculated that if policy remained unchanged, under "most likely" assumptions, entitlement spending would hit 12.5 per cent of GNP in 2000, total outlays would be 25.2 per cent, and the national debt would equal 68.5 per cent of GNP. Peruse the 1992 GDP shares in Tables 1 and 2, mindful of the minuscule difference between GNP and GDP. We've *already almost reached* the projections for 2000 which would make entitlements "unaffordable," *only four years after those projections were made.*

Our two biggest entitlements, Social Security and Medicare, are running trust-fund surpluses, but we will not enjoy this reprieve much longer. As baby-boomers retire in 2010–2030, the retiree population will rise faster than the number of workers paying Social Security and Medicare taxes, driving the number of workers supporting each beneficiary from 3.3 in 1991 to about 2 by 2035, for Social Security, and from 4 now to 2 by 2050 for Medicare's Hospital Insurance. Demographics, then, will drive the costs of Social Security and Medicare above their revenues. They will run deficits, as Social Security did in the late Seventies, and we will close the gap by draining the trust funds, forcing the Treasury to borrow more from the public. Total deficits will exceed on-budget deficits, then, even before the trust funds are exhausted.

Medicare's board of trustees reported in April that Medicare's Federal Hospital Insurance Trust Fund will run out by 1999, under the assumptions they deem most likely. Thus, as the 1992 report stated, "the trust fund is projected to become exhausted even before the major demographic shift begins to occur."

In April, Social Security's trustees reported that because the share of workers awarded disability benefits has risen in the past ten years while the beneficiaries whose benefits terminate have decreased, the Disability Insurance trust fund will run out in 1997, perhaps as soon as 1995. The bulk of Social Security, Old-Age and Survivors Insurance, faces trust-fund exhaustion in 2044, or 2025 under pessimistic assumptions.

Meanwhile, health-care costs will be raising the costs of Medicaid and veterans' benefits too. Given all this, total deficits of $700 to $800 billion are virtually certain long before 2030.

It necessarily follows that only radical entitlement reform will avert a fiscal disaster. We cannot restore sound public finance without radically tightening eligibility rules and scaling back benefits. Reforms should include repealing the benefit liberalizations voted in the 1970s; imposing a rigorous means test (of 94.3 million households receiving means-tested non-cash benefits in 1990, 82 million were above the poverty level); confining veterans' health benefits to service-related ailments; eliminating multiple dipping in government pensions; and radically restructuring Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid.

Après Nous . . .

BUT THE Entitlement State will tempt politicians to flout sound finance as long as it exists. Rather than grasp the nettle, President Clinton is pursuing taxes and spending-cut gimmicks. And barring tyrannical cost controls—which almost certainly would not work anyway—any national health plan will worsen our disastrous prospects.

Unfortunately, conservatives have done little better. Reagan muffed his chance to tackle entitlements. Bush ruled out touching Social Security, and proposed limiting growth of other entitlements to the sum of the inflation rate, population growth, and an additional 2.5 per cent. Kemp recently proposed the same sans the 2.5 per cent extra. Conservatives are the rightful owners of the sound-finance issue, but we won't recover it from Clinton—or avert financial calamity—with such gimmicks and Band-Aids.

For students of history, there's something eerily familiar about all this. In 1783, King Louis XVI appointed Charles Alexandre de Calonne comptroller-general to rescue his foundering finances. Calonne discovered that France had a debt of 646,000,000 francs, rising by 50,000,000 francs a year, with only 360,000 in the treas-

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ury. Ruling out tax increases and spending cuts, Calonne fled into gimmicks: a lottery; sale of offices; asking the Church for money in exchange for suppressing Beaumarchais's edition of Voltaire. He left the royal household's soaring expenses alone. Hoping that improved infrastructure would make the economy grow and produce more revenue (sound familiar?), he poured money into public works, making the debt grow faster. At last, in August 1786, Calonne told Louis that France faced financial ruin. That year's spending, he claimed, would be 587 million *livres*, with revenue of 475 million, for a deficit of 112 million, almost 25 per cent of the revenue (we're doing worse; see Table 1). Since 1776, the government had borrowed 1,250 million *livres*, and from 1786 to 1794 would have to repay 50 million in short-term loans each year (still want to shift to short-term treasuries, Mr. President?). Meanwhile, debt-service costs would take nearly half the annual revenue (we're getting there; see Table 1). Louis's last resort, like Clinton's, was higher taxes. For this, he eventually convened the States General. The rest is history. □

The Case of AZT

THE CURE THAT FAILED

Did the AIDS lobby know what it was doing when it pressed the government to approve AZT?

TOM BETHELL

LINDSEY NAGEL was born in Petrosani, Rumania, in October 1990. She was adopted by a Minneapolis couple, Cheryl and Steve Nagel, who brought her back to the States later that year. Within a few weeks, they were dismayed to find that she had tested positive for HIV. Although she showed no symptoms of disease, the Nagels' doctor put her on Retrovir syrup, otherwise known as AZT. In response to protests by homosexual activists this drug had been hurriedly approved by the FDA in 1987. "The government bends to AIDS victims' pleas," was the way *U.S. News & World Report* headlined a critical story at the time.

Over the next 18 months Lindsey's general health declined. She became "hyperactive," as though "she did not feel comfortable in her body," according to her father. She did not eat properly, avoided milk, and suffered from nausea and diarrhea. Then, in October 1992, things took a turn for the worse.

Mr. Bethell, an NR *contributor, is Washington correspondent for* The American Spectator.

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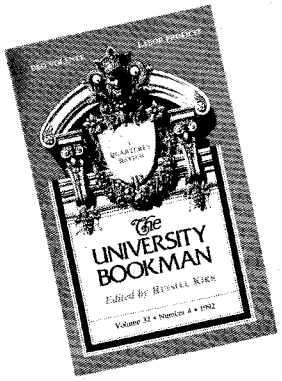

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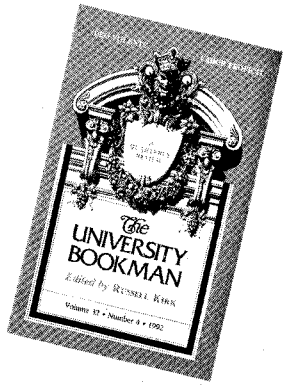

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Night after night she woke up screaming. Her parents would find her half sitting up in bed, clutching at her knees and thighs. Sometimes this would happen twice a night.

A month or so before this turn of events, the Nagels had read a couple of magazine articles about Peter Duesberg, a virologist at UC Berkeley. Duesberg says that HIV does not cause AIDS, and that AZT is toxic and not a rational treatment for AIDS. The Nagels wanted to know more, so they wrote and told him about the treatment their daughter was receiving.

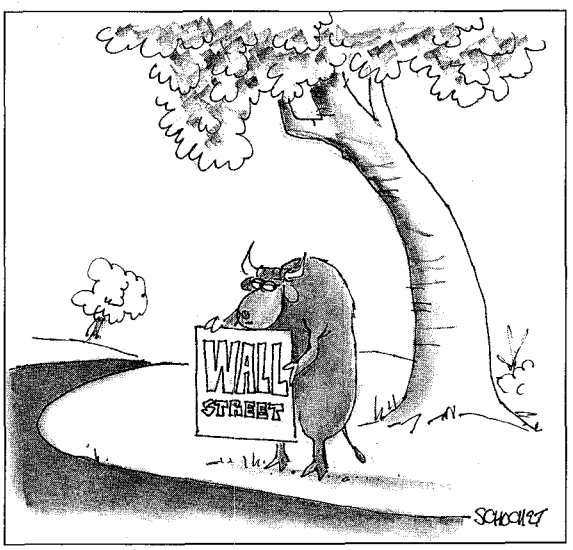
"Take her off AZT immediately if you want to see her live," Duesberg wrote back. "Your daughter will die from it, like Kimberly Bergalis, if you continue the treatment."

Kimberly Bergalis was believed to have been infected with HIV by her dentist in Florida. She had a yeast infection, which is common among women, but it is also one of the "indicator diseases" within the Centers for Disease Control's ever-expanding definition of AIDS. (First defined in 1982, AIDS was redefined more and more inclusively in 1984, 1985, 1987, and 1993.) With a yeast infection plus HIV, Miss Bergalis became an AIDS patient by definition, and was duly prescribed AZT. Within a year she was in a wheelchair (as was Rudolf Nureyev toward the end of his life, and he, too, took AZT). Among its other side-effects, AZT causes myopathy, or muscle atrophy. Miss Bergalis died in 1991.

Arthur Ashe also took AZT. After his death, *New York Daily News* columnist Earl Caldwell reported that Ashe had "wanted to" break away from his treatment, but was worried about giving offense. "What will I tell my doctors?" he said to a friend. Michael Callen, the author of *Surviving AIDS*, claims that the only long-term AIDS survivors are those who have not taken AZT. Larry Kramer, HIV-positive gay playwright, and unremitting scourge of the government when it doesn't seem to be doing enough, says that AZT is not for him.

AZT was designed in 1964 as chemotherapy for cancer. But it was never approved, because of its side-effects. With an AIDS cure much in demand, it was retrieved from the storage room. After toxicity and efficacy trials seemed to show that it did some good, at least in the short run, the FDA gave the drug its seal of approval. "From a failed cancer medication to the only fully approved AIDS treatment, AZT has made an astonishing comeback," *Discover* reported in 1990.

Chemotherapy prevents cells from dividing by fooling cellular DNA into accepting a chain-terminator into the DNA chain. It's like putting a caboose (with no rear coupling) into the middle of a freight train that was supposed to incorporate many more cars. Now the train cannot expand beyond the caboose because there's nothing to hook onto.



The problem with chemotherapy is that it stops all cells from dividing, not just cancer cells. Science hasn't been able to figure out a way for it to zero in on the cancer exclusively. Cancer cells divide rapidly, but so do stomach cells and bone-marrow cells and lots of other cells. The formation of new DNA chains is stopped within all of them. That's why long-term chemotherapy is very destructive.

The same problem arises with AZT. The drug doesn't know how to find just the HIV-infected cells (assuming, arguendo, that HIV really does cause AIDS). And that's why Duesberg wrote in a recent article that AZT "must be the most toxic drug ever approved for indefinite therapy in America." Nonetheless, about 100,000 people are now taking it. One is Jeffrey Schmalz, the *New York Times* reporter who has AIDS. Many people report early beneficial effects from AZT. And Schmalz told me that the drug had saved his life. "The problem is long range," he said, "because it begins to eat away at your system."

What about the efficacy and toxicity studies? Here I warn *NR* readers that I shall make a "left wing" point, but I wouldn't bother to do so if the news media had shown any interest in it. Surprisingly, they have not. Many of the AZT studies have been funded by the company that makes AZT, Burroughs Wellcome. This was true of the "double-blind, placebo-controlled trials" in 1986 that led to FDA approval of the drug. The results of these trials were published in *The New England Journal of Medicine* in 1987.

I called Jerome Kassirer, the editor-in-chief of *The New England Journal of Medicine*, to ask him about "scientific etiquette" with respect to publishing studies funded by the manufacturers of the thing studied. He said that the *NEJM*'s policy was very simple—disclosure. "We disclose, typically on the cover page, what the relationship [of the study] is to the company," he said. And indeed, with the AZT toxicity study, it plainly says on the cover page: "Supported by the Burroughs Wellcome Company. . . ." Likewise the efficacy study includes among its many co-authors "the AZT Collaborative Working Group," which, if you read the fine print, also on the cover page, includes five scientists from the Burroughs Wellcome Company.

"If we have a scientific study," Kassirer said, "we have to assume that the data are the data."

Would *The New England Journal* publish a smoking study funded by Philip Morris? I asked. "In principle, we might publish it," he said. "But it would have to pass the same kind of scientific standards as any other study."

Flawed Tests

WHAT ARE those standards? When are the data not the data? Joan Shenton, who produced a program critical of AZT shown in Britain last February, published a letter in *The Lancet* claiming that "both the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and trial investigators knew that the two trials [mentioned above] had become unblinded." (FDA documents, obtained through Freedom of Information procedure, had disclosed this information.) The patients

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figured out who was receiving the drug and who was receiving a placebo, and those receiving the drug shared it with those who were not.

Furthermore the trials, planned for 24 weeks, were ended "after an average of only 17 weeks," according to Miss Shenton. It has since come out that 30 (of 145) AZT recipients were kept alive by blood transfusions to compensate for severe bone-marrow toxicity. Burroughs Wellcome concedes "the drug has been studied for limited periods of time and long-term safety and efficacy are not known." The *New Scientist* reported in 1991 that "there are serious, unanswered questions about its long-term effects."

In early April came the results of a three-year European study of early use of AZT with HIV-infected individuals—the Concorde trials. One group was given AZT immediately; the other, not until they developed symptoms. (It has not been reported how the subjects were chosen, but it is a reasonable assumption that many were drug-users.) The study therefore did not test the efficacy of AZT itself, because most subjects seem to have ended up taking the drug. But early use was shown to have no beneficial effects, and the fine print in *The Lancet* showed that significantly more of the early users experienced anemia, low white-blood-cell counts, nausea, and vomiting than the late-use group.

The researchers (in Britain and France) came under pressure to stop the study early—as three out of four comparable U.S. studies have been. In Britain, Lawrence K. Altman reported in the *New York Times*, "health officials are less influenced by pressure from advocacy groups." It's almost as though officials here don't want to know the truth. Even more surprising is that gay activists should have so much faith in government science. The very effectiveness of their protests have shown just how easily government science can be politicized.

What happened to young Lindsey? As soon as the Nagels received Duesberg's letter, they discontinued her AZT. Her condition immediately improved. "It was dramatic, almost overnight," Cheryl Nagel told me. She stopped crying out in the middle of the night. Her leg cramps ceased. She became much calmer. Her food intake almost doubled. She happily drank the milk that she used to reject. And since

"...the weight of evidence is such that no reasonable person could believe sexual harassment occurred in this case."

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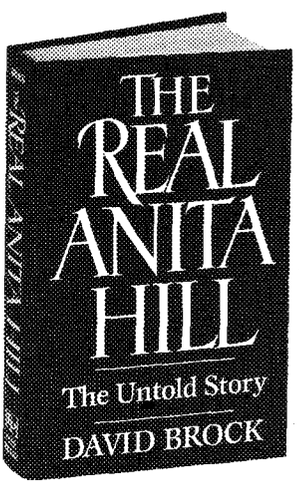

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then she has gained over five pounds. More recently her mother has spent a good deal of time in the University of Minnesota's medical library, trying to figure out why Lindsey was prescribed AZT in the first place. The label published by Burroughs Wellcome does not "indicate" the use of AZT with asymptomatic infants. At the end of March, the Nagels filed a complaint with the Minnesota Board of Medical Practice, but they do not expect that much will come of it. An FDA official told them that once a drug has been approved by the FDA, "it can be prescribed for dandruff." □

Asian Prospects

WHERE THE ACTION IS

Economically, politically, and, alas, militarily, the U.S. cannot afford to ignore East Asia.

ROBERT ELEGANT

THE public scribe has been for millennia a fixture of Asian city and village life, particularly in Confucian societies like China and Vietnam, where the written word was sacred and bureaucracy was sacrosanct—as they are still. For a few coppers, he would write a letter or fill out an official form for the illiterate.

Despite a heartening increase in literacy in both countries, the public scribe still plies his trade. In Haikou, the boom-town capital of the new Chinese island province of Hainan, he (or now often she) uses a computer linked to a spanking new laser printer. In Saigon, the most lively city in Vietnam, he uses a creaky old typewriter.

That contrast epitomizes the difference between the two countries of Asia that are, despite their own fervent denials, most alike culturally, politically, and even economically. Both are now attempting to preserve autocratic "socialist" regimes while pursuing gradual, almost grudging, liberalization.

The Big Dragon and the Little Dragon are, however, both late-comers to the steel, glass, and silicon bazaar that is East Asia today. While the rest of the world is in recession, East Asia is booming.

Some three years ago, I published *Pacific Destiny*, which described the region's bounding vitality and the extraordinary economic progress it had made since I first saw it decades earlier. Yet, during extensive travels last year, I was astonished by the pace of its growth, by its increasing independence, almost assertiveness, and by its challenge to the rest of mankind.

From Seoul through Shanghai and Hong Kong to Jakarta new buildings are rising and investment is increasing. Lagging behind are only the feckless Philippines, and the troubled states of Indochina: Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam.

Yet Vietnam, the rogue state whose economy was virtually smashed by bumbling Communist dictatorship, is now stirring.

Even dour Hanoi—never noted for its liveliness, cultural or commercial, even under French colonial rule—is looking up. The shops are crammed with goods and customers on Basket Street, Silk Street, Silver Street, and the other roads where craftsmen and merchants still work in medieval segregation by trade.

Even frivolity is not entirely absent from Hanoi. Opposite a busy public market a storekeeper proudly discusses her white shih-tzu imported from Japan at a cost of 20 million *dong*, about $2,000. The bitch is not a particularly good specimen, but the sale of puppies to other yuppies will yield a profit.

After the seclusion of past decades, all Vietnamese, from coolies to reformist Prime Minister Vo Van Kiet, are anxious to join the modern world. Japanese, Germans, British, and Australians are already trading and investing, but the Vietnamese firmly believe their economy will not take off until the Americans come back.

The irony is refreshing—yet, somehow, disturbing to one who spent two to three years in Vietnam from 1955 to 1975. Making my first visit since the end of the war, I was surprised by the particularly warm welcome given to Americans. I felt neither bitterness nor guilt, but, chiefly, compassion for the miserable condition of a highly cultivated people. Per-capita income is less than $200 a year; gasoline is sold by the pint; and the high road from the chief port of the north, Haiphong, to the capital, Hanoi, is rutted, broken, potholed, narrow, and very dangerous.

A former protégé of the Communists, who studied economics in East Berlin, asked me despairingly. "Where did we go wrong? Why did all our planning fail?"

In Saigon, however, the pulse of commercial life beats much stronger, particularly in Cholon, the city's vast Chinatown. Yet the irony is once again inescapable: regarded with suspicion by Hanoi and ruled rather like an occupied country, the South is markedly better off than the victorious North. The prosperity and skills created by American intervention have lingered, as has a large Overseas Chinese population, who are the mainspring of economic activity.

The tentative reforms already enacted by Prime Minister Kiet, which come down to uneasy toleration of a limited free market, have already improved conditions in both North and South. And it appears that the damaging American economic embargo will soon be lifted, unless Bill Clinton is too frightened of further offending by such intelligent magnanimity voters who resent his having slithered out of military service during the war. Nonetheless, the Prime Minister does not primarily blame the embargo for acute economic troubles, but, rather, the corruption and the inefficiency of his own government.

Confucius Says . . .

THE neo-Confucian ethos, which drives, above all, some 25 million intelligent, energetic, and materialistic Overseas Chinese, is the prime mover of Southeast Asia's pros-

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perity. It is not entirely a sunlit vista of respect for learning, compulsion to excel, and happy cooperation between amenable subordinates and responsible superiors. The dark side of Confucianism has always been its incitement to major corruption.

Official theft is rampant in China and nearly universal in Vietnam. In both countries it is nurtured, albeit unintentionally, by a despotism that puritanically underpays its officials as did the Confucian Empire.

The Sacred Canon, Confucian or Marxist, requires officials to serve for love of the people and to practice virtue because of their innate nobility of character. But they don't. Officials, too, must live and look out for their families.

The mere authoritarianism that prevails elsewhere in Asia is less hypocritical and, in part for that reason, a little less corrupt. It is, nonetheless, as vain to hope to suppress Asian corruption as it is to expect Asians to practice perfect democracy—or even imperfect democracy like the United States. One can only hope to restrain corruption so that it does not interfere excessively with economic, cultural, and social life.

The intractability and the prevalence of corruption make it particularly difficult to assess the prospects for Asia. Moreover, the repudiation of Marxism–Leninism and the collapse of the Soviet empire have produced consequences in Asia as decisive, if not as highly visible, as the consequences in Europe. Major non-economic forces are emerging, although we outsiders—like Asians themselves—still think of the region first in terms of its stunning economic triumphs. The Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, the rubric that the Japanese used (with varying degrees of cynicism) to figleaf their military conquest of the resources and the markets of East Asia, is today a literal reality.

The thrust of trade is moving slowly from Europe and, above all, America to intra-regional markets, and all the rapidly developing countries are buying from each other, although Japan is still by far the biggest seller. Asian appetites, not foreign appetites alone, now demand greater production.

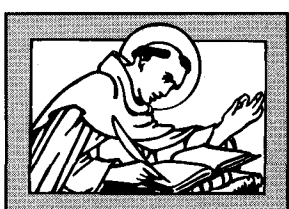
The nascent East Asian Trading Area—with more than two billion consumers and producers—will, as intra-regional trade expands further, make the European Economic Community look small. It will not be politically united or formally integrated economically. It will, nonetheless, be bound by common interests, as well as by the selective Japanese investment that assigns each country a different economic role and makes those roles complementary. East Asia will, however, not be wholly secure. Divided by local quarrels, it will also be fearful of domination by one of the potential great powers: Japan, China, Russia.

For a time subsumed into the conjuring of economic miracles, the same psychological forces that inspired the anti-colonial revolutions of the late 1940s and the 1950s are forcefully asserting themselves today. In good part because the new prosperity gives them greater scope, non-economic motivations are exerting much greater influence. They are racial and cultural pride, nationalist ardor and nationalistic ambitions, military assertiveness and resentment of outsiders.

From Strength to Strength

JAPAN has been pronounced to be in recession. But what a recession! Faced with a slump in the domestic market Japan concentrated on exports. In 1992 her surplus on cur-

Mr. Elegant, whose latest book is Pacific Destiny: Inside Asia Today, *lived in Asia for several decades.*



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rent account rose from the "normal" $80 or $90 billion to $135 billion.

Yet not Japan but little Taiwan, a nation less than half the size of Maine with a population of no more than 21 million, holds the largest foreign-exchange reserves of any nation. Taiwan's entrepreneurs are adroit at shifting production to cope with new circumstances. They are also becoming adroit at investing their surplus abroad and selling their multifarious goods in markets other than the U.S. and Europe—using the ready-made network of Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia.

Yet Taiwan is minuscule beside the People's Republic of China with more than 1.2 *billion* people and four million square miles of territory. The People's Republic has been engaged in serious economic development only since preliminary reforms began to loosen the straitjacket of Marxist–Leninist–Maoist dogma in 1979. Yet the gross product of her coastal provinces is growing at 15 to 20 per cent annually. Moreover, China last year racked up a surplus with the U.S. alone of $18 billion, the third highest.

Much of those exports were transferred from the previous accounts of Hong Kong and Taiwan; both have exported millions of jobs to the Mainland, where labor is so much cheaper and the supply of labor is, for practical purposes, inexhaustible.

China's progress is still hampered by the determination of the aged autocrats in Peking to retain their *apparently* centralized power at all costs, with the massacre in Tiananmen Square in 1989 being only the bloodiest of constant clashes between authority and the populace. Nonetheless, there is now little question that the People's Republic will within two or three decades operate the third largest economy in the world. Particularly significant is the phenomenal improvement in telecommunications. Fifteen years ago it took half a day to call from Nanjing to Shanghai, lining up at a central exchange; two months ago I simply lifted the handset in my hotel room and dialed.

Yet the network is still tenuous outside the major cities. China possesses only 0.48 lines for every hundred persons, against an average of 45 lines per hundred in the developed world. However, major orders are being placed with the goal of providing 5 to 7 lines per hundred by the year 2000. Only seven years from today, China could constitute 20 to 30 per cent of the world market for communications equipment.

Yet China is still very poor outside the area of beanstalk growth, roughly the area where foreign influence and foreign firms were dominant before World War II. Further, unemployment is a massive social and political problem that grows more severe each day; a useful pool of labor can overflow in a devastating flood when the number of unemployed and underemployed exceeds 150 million. A primitive infrastructure is the greatest obstacle to development. Roads and railroads are woefully inadequate, and flying on Chinese airlines is almost as certain to get you as Russian roulette if you persist in such perilous sports.

Not at all surprising, however, is the ready adaptation of young Chinese to a consumer society. Conspicuous consumption has long been a Chinese vice—if vice it be. Leather jackets made by private entrepreneurs command prices in the state-run Shanghai Friendship Store well above those produced by state enterprises. Not because the quality is higher, an amiable yuppie explained to me as his gold-ringed fingers peeled hundred-*yuan* notes off a roll as thick as a beer bottle. Not because of the quality, but because they are the latest style.

The Barrel of a Gun

THE LATE, little lamented Chairman Mao Tse-tung loved to coin simplistic aphorisms. My favorite *fausse naïveté* is: "People's Communes are good!" They weren't.

Perhaps the most often cited among that stock of mock wisdom is the brutal observation: "Power grows from the barrel of the gun!"

True enough. Yet, nowadays, making and wielding the gun is an extremely complex process. China, which already possesses nuclear weapons, is now mastering that process.

As civilian power, which means largely economic power, effectively devolves to the provinces, the People's Liberation Army is the chief unifying factor in the People's Republic. The military are kept happy with extensive high-tech rearmament and retraining—in part in recognition that they are the steel rod reinforcing the over-sanded political cement that barely holds China together. In equal part, however, because the armed threat backs a new international assertiveness Peking may hope will divert the people's attention from the faults of the weak central government.

China is buying military equipment from the nations of the former Soviet Union, particularly aircraft. Several squadrons of SU-27 attack bombers, provided with air-to-air refueling capability by Israeli technology, are a major new factor in the power equation in Southeast Asia. Their immediate purpose is to back up the Chinese garrison on the Spratly Islands, which are claimed by several nations bordering the possible, but unlikely, underwater oil field they dominate.

Some years ago, Field Marshal Pibulsonggram, then the relatively benevolent military dictator of Thailand, confided to me: "It doesn't matter who rules China—monarchists, Nationalists, or Communists. A strong China is bad for my country."

At the moment, Thailand and China are getting along, in part because they learned to coordinate their policies toward Cambodia under American aegis. The Thais are, nonetheless, nervous, even as they buy cheap Chinese armaments from an export company controlled by the Joint Chiefs of the People's Liberation Army.

Pibulsonggram's law should not be forgotten. It does not matter that China's swelling bubble of prosperity is still extremely fragile. That prosperity still means that China's rulers are no longer deterred by economic concerns from behavior that damages Hong Kong and alienates Taiwan, the sources of most of their capital and expertise. The campaign of intimidation mounted against Hong Kong demonstrates, as William McGurn points out [next page] that political objectives are still paramount, and, further, that the Chinese leaders' appreciation of their interests differs sharply from the assessment outsiders ascribe to them.

All the while, Taiwan watches—and shakes her head. Peking is wooing Taiwan, seeking to persuade her to return to the bosom of the motherland. But the assault on Hong Kong makes that bosom appear rocky.

If it were not for such maladroitness, China would be a much greater threat in the future than she is likely to be. If it were not for the centripetal

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force that throws more power to the provinces, a highly centralized China would be a far greater threat.

Nonetheless, the size, the reshaping, and the political power of the People's Liberation Army make China's neighbors nervous. None wants conflict, and, as Japanese Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa pointed out recently, all want the U.S. to maintain a substantial military presence in Asia to deter local conflict. Miyazawa also appealed to Southeast Asians to begin talking, at least, about a formal security apparatus.

The region was already responding on its own. ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and APEC (Asia–Pacific Economic Co-operation) are extending their scope and membership. Significantly, a conference on the Sea Lanes of Communication in Bali recently drew most chiefs of naval operations of the region, including Australia, which is trying to reknit its frayed ties with its neighbors.

A prudent regard for the future is requiring Japan to reconsider Article Nine of her Constitution, which renounces war and armed force as instruments of national policy. Although the Japanese abhor nuclear weapons, they are likely to possess such weapons within the next few years—probably on the last-turn-of-the-screwdriver principle, as in Israel and India.

No More Kowtows

HONG KONG—Not since Lord Macartney refused to get down on all fours and perform the ritual "Three Kneelings and Nine Prostrations" two hundred years ago this spring has one of Her Majesty's representatives so rattled Peking. The offending party is Hong Kong's new governor, Chris Patten, whose crime has been to deny China a veto over his proposals for political reform in the remaining four years of British rule. Although Chinese leaders traditionally prefer to make their feelings known in enigmatic riddles, in Patten's case they have made an exception. He has been called "a prostitute," "a thief," a relic of "stinking colonialism," and "the greatest criminal in Hong Kong history."

Nor were these off-the-cuff remarks by lower-ranking or unnamed officials. To the contrary, these characterizations have been published in the highest Party organs, and Premier Li Peng himself employed a few of them in a television address to the National People's Congress. In popular lore it has all been depicted as a clash over democracy, and most of the press has bought this line. This is most unfortunate, because it clouds the more fundamental reasons behind the clash.

Patten acknowledges as much himself. "I freely confess that my proposals are not a great step forward toward democracy," he recently told the *Far Eastern Economic Review*. "They aren't even a small step. . . . What they are is an attempt to secure a legislative council which is broadly based, which is credible, which isn't simply a rubber stamp."

Without this latter, any hopes for Hong Kong's enjoying the "high degree of autonomy" promised it in the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration is impossible. The reasons lie in the peculiar colonial framework that now exists, in which virtually all real power is held by the executive. It is doubtful that anyone but the British could have made this work, and what made it work was the traditional disinclination to invoke the vast powers they reserve for themselves. Whatever other virtues Peking might possess, a disinclination to invoke power is not one of them. Come 1997 Hong Kong will have a chief executive appointed by and accountable to China. Without a strong Legislative Council rooted in (if not elected by) the Hong Kong community, Hong Kong will have no autonomous institutions.

That is why China has objected not to any specific portion of the Patten plan but to the whole kit and caboodle. China has from the very outset opposed what it calls a "three-legged stool," i.e., giving Hong Kong a role in a matter that rightly should be decided solely by China and Britain.

In the process, however, China has revealed much about itself. Peking has attempted to bully Hong Kong into submission by deliberately driving the market down, calling into question the validity of contracts, and threatening British trade. This, of course, might be expected in a country that despite its economic openings still cannot bring itself to utter the word capitalism (the new preferred term is "market socialism with Chinese characteristics"). But it all comes at the same time China is busy trying to persuade the West that it should be readmitted to GATT, be awarded the 2000 Olympic Games, and see its Most Favored Nation status renewed.

Patten also enrages China personally. He could hardly be more different from his predecessor, Lord Wilson. A career Foreign Office man, fluent in Mandarin and diplomatic in bearing, Wilson was exactly the kind of barbarian the Chinese have been handling for centuries. Like so many others before him, Wilson started out believing his appreciation for the subtleties of Chinese culture would bring about a more reasonable Peking; he ended up locked in a perpetual kowtow. For Britain the last straw apparently came when John Major found himself reviewing a Chinese military guard on Tiananmen Square as the first Western leader to go there after the massacre—all to reach an airport deal that China would later renege on. Patten, fortunately, speaks no Chinese.

And so as the sun begins to set on the British Empire, the colonial government seems intent on leaving with a show of honor. Whether it will be enough to salvage a Hong Kong weakened by previous sellouts is hard to say, but it has given people here hope. It has also exposed Peking's true colors. In the early days of Communism Britain was viewed as the imperialist par excellence, the nation most responsible for China's humiliations. But four decades after seizing control the sons of Mao have come full circle, nailing to their door an order reminiscent of the worst of colonial Shanghai: "No dogs or Hong Kong Chinese allowed."

—WILLIAM MCGURN

Mr. McGurn, formerly NR*'s Washington bureau chief, is now a senior editor of the* Far Eastern Economic Review.

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China and Japan should prove useful counterweights to each other—and to the Russians, who will return to East Asia in force when they begin to master their internal problems. It is essential to keep the Japanese from either being overwhelmed by the sheer mass of China or going rogue again. Material development should be the best way to keep China's mind off reclaiming former protectorates and reviving past imperial glories, although her first economic strides have bred hubris. It is also essential to keep Chinese ambitions within bounds—and to temper Chinese arrogance.

The U.S. Role

HOW ASIANS will accomplish those vital tasks is still unclear. The United States could help, but it is gradually receding from the region. New U.S. investment lags markedly behind Asian investment, and major bases in the Philippines have been vacated. Although U.S. firepower in East Asia is higher than ever, troop strength and mobility are declining. The corresponding decline in European commitment signals the end of the era that opened in the fifteenth century when the Portuguese began planting trading colonies in Asia.

It will take a while yet, perhaps a long while, but Asians are gradually easing outsiders from the region. Nonetheless, it is desperately important to the United States that she retain and protect her major economic interests in East Asia, while postponing the inevitable rundown of her military commitment as long as possible.

In dealing with a vigorously resurgent East Asia, it is essential to remember certain key points:

Above all, the region is so varied that by comparison Europe is a single, seamless entity. Despite traces of Judaism and Islam—which in any event spring from the same root—Christianity is, by and large, the religion of Europe, however honored by abstention. Asia has more than a dozen distinct religions including those three; the only common thread, Buddhism, is more diverse than even Christianity. The same observation holds true culturally, linguistically—even gastronomically. Because of such diversity, it is dangerous to generalize about East Asia and fatal to try to apply a uniform policy to every country.

Neither substantial democracy nor the mythical free market is likely to appear in East Asia. Politically, the best we can expect is authoritarianism somewhat responsive to the popular will like the one-party democracy of Japan, which Korea is now aping. Economically, Asian rulers will continue to select those aspects of the open market that please them, while continuing to exert control over both production and consumption.

U.S. policy in general, but particularly toward China, Japan, and Vietnam, must be hard-headed—neither sentimental nor vindictive.

George Bush got it just about right toward China, though his disinclination to wax critical of the country where he served as a kind of ambassador encouraged the Chinese gerontocracy to further excess. Ideally, President Clinton would speak out against Chinese offenses against human decency, but would not yield to the temptation to cancel Most Favored Nation status. Such self-righteous self-indulgence would hamper the exercise of our greatest weapon against tyranny in China, the gradual erosion by commercial contacts of totalitarian control over both material development and freedom of thought.

As for Japan, it should not be allowed to become a twenty-foot-high monster in American minds. The Japanese *are* more efficient and more ruthless than most of us because they are more adaptable and more submissive. But the Japanese are also fallible human beings, neither omniscient nor omnipotent, as their present difficulties demonstrate. Besides, Japan is *not* an enemy to be challenged, but a former close friend that is still bound to the U.S. by historical, economic, and security ties. The freedom of maneuver conferred by the end of the Cold War loosened those ties, but hardly broke them.

Perhaps paradoxically, the security ties are once more tightening. China, resentful of her humiliation at the hands of the West in the first half of the twentieth century and throughout the nineteenth, is seeking to reassert her former hegemony over Southeast Asia. That assertiveness must lead to friction with Japan, which also finds herself endangered by an old threat from North Korea, that rogue elephant among nations. Pyongyang recently renounced its adherence to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, declaring a state of half-war with the Republic of Korea in the south. If the United States military presence were not still strong, the North would surely have invaded. Forty years of ceasefire have not bridged the chasm that divides those sister countries.

The U.S. presence in Asia is thus demonstrably by no means wholly a matter of self-interest or self-righteousness. It is desired by almost every country, only China having changed her mind since 1990. That presence is, however, also in the American interest. The action is in Asia—and Americans must be in Asia. □

A Case of Self-Defense

WHO KILLED SDI?

We could have had a working anti-missile defense thirty years ago. We still don't. Why?

ANGELO CODEVILLA

IF EVEN one ballistic missile had been fired at the U.S. on March 23, 1993, it would have hit its target just as surely as it would have done ten years earlier, on the day when Ronald Reagan told the world that the U.S. Government was committed to protecting the American people against missile attack. After spending some $30 billion, Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative has produced not one weapon or sensor capa-

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ble of protecting anyone against anything.

America has never lacked the technical know-how to defend itself. Anti-missile technology has always kept up with or outpaced that of offensive missiles. In the 1950s, when medium- and long-range rockets were first tested, U.S. Army radars were picking incoming nose-cones out of debris, and surface-to-air interceptors were being readied to strike them. But the anti-missile mission became a bureaucratic orphan when the Army and Air Force each failed to get exclusive title to it and split it among themselves. Then, during the 1960s, missile defense became the chief villain of a doctrine that captivated the U.S. foreign-policy establishment: the U.S. and the Soviet Union would live happily ever after if neither attempted to interfere with the other's ability to wreak nuclear holocaust. Ideology combined with the military's interest-group politics to make research into ever more advanced defensive technologies more attractive than building currently available defenses.

This coalition of ideologists and the military was responsible for the Nixon–Brezhnev ABM treaty of 1972, which prohibited defenses except within defined limits. The Soviets of course strained against those limits (and then some) and built all the elements of a nationwide defense. By contrast, the U.S. Government tried to make sure that nothing in the U.S. arsenal would have any anti-missile capacity at all. Thus among many, many other things, when the Army tried to build a system, called *Patriot*, to defend against both aircraft and ballistic missiles, the Ford and Carter Administrations ordered that its radar power be cut in half, its software slowed, and its fuse rendered inaccurate.

At the end of the 1970s this pattern almost broke down. The long denied Soviet strategic buildup had become undeniable, and the U.S. no longer had the option of countering it with an offensive-missile buildup of its own. Some longtime Defense executives, e.g., Eugene Fubini, and a few politicians, e.g., Senators Malcolm Wallop (R., Wyo.) and Fritz Hollings (D., S.C.) and Representative Jack Kemp (R., N.Y.), began to encourage industry to see how new technology could take a bite out of the Soviet missile threat.

Industry responded with programs to produce working models of a variety of ground- and space-based devices. There were to be big rockets fired into the path of oncoming warheads. Some would carry sensor packages to sort out the warheads from the decoys, while others would spawn multiple homing vehicles that would smash into the warheads hundreds of miles out in space. There were also plans to merge the technology that lets our spy satellites track their targets with the newfound capacity to build big chemically fueled lasers. The resulting weapons were to destroy enemy missiles soon after they lifted off into space. Then there were to be Boeing 767 aircraft fitted with sensor domes to sort out any warheads that had reached the edge of the atmosphere and direct interceptor rockets to them, much as our AWACS aircraft now vector fighter planes to their targets. These and many others were not research projects—they were deployable devices.

Even the Carterites . . .

THE Carter Administration's unfriendliness to deploying anti-missile systems did not uniformly extend to their development. Secretary of Defense Harold Brown, Undersecretary William Perry, Secretary of the Air Force Hans Mark, and Director of Advanced Projects Robert Fossum were men of intellect and integrity. They funded missile defense adequately, and twice even doubled the small space laser budget. They rejected the proposals of such opponents of defense as Seymour Zeiberg, Victor Reis, John Foster, and the Defense Science Board to restrict projects to basic research or to mislead Congress about their feasibility. Hence, during the Carter Administration, advocates of defense were able to make a solid, widely reported case that defense was both necessary and available.

Despite Ronald Reagan's oft-expressed enthusiasm for anti-missile defense, the people who took charge of it in his Administration were uniformly hostile. (Martin Anderson, and Edwin Meese were strongly in favor, but neither had the knowledge or inclination to take on the national-security bureaucracy.) In January 1981 the Weinberger Pentagon turned down an allocation by the Office of Management and Budget of $500 million for space-based anti-missile weapons. Examples of any agency turning down money from OMB for any purpose are almost non-existent. In October 1981 White House science advisor Jay Keyworth told an audience of aerospace executives that he had spent three-fourths of his time since coming to Washington trying to turn off congressional pressure for anti-missile defense. He chose Victor Reis, who had been too anti-defense for the Carter Administration, to handle anti-missile matters at the Reagan White House. Director of Advanced Projects Robert Cooper drove out pro-defense engineers, de-scoped anti-missile projects, and then told Congress he was pursuing them to the max. Secretary Caspar Weinberger followed the Generals, who were opposed. As a consequence, when congressional advocates of defense went to the top to complain about the lack of honest answers out of the Pentagon, or about Administration officials working with leftist House staff to scale back the modest programs left over from the Carter Administration, they found smiles, but no one was home.

Regardless of what Ronald Reagan might have intended when he spoke to the nation on March 23, 1983, his Administration re-established the pattern of researching anti-missile defense in order not to build it.

Reagan's interest in the subject came during a meeting with the Joint Chiefs of Staff on February 11, 1983, called to discuss how to rescue the Administration's reputation with regard to strategic weaponry. Reagan had called the Carter strategic program "wimpy," and had spoken of the need to equip the United States to fight, survive, and win a nuclear war. But his change to the Carter program amounted chiefly to adding 100 B-1 bombers while subtracting 100 MX missiles. Thus while the Left was calling Reagan a warmonger, the Right was struggling to find reasons to defend him. What could he possibly do to help America's side of the strategic balance, to hearten his political base, and to pull the rug out from under his opponents? The previous Sunday, February 6, the front page of the *Washington Post*'s Outlook section had been

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devoted to a debate on the merits of modern anti-missile defense between Senator Wallop and myself on one side and Hans Bethe on the other. Admiral James Watkins floated the argument that an American anti-missile defense would devalue the Soviet Union's most threatening strategic asset, and protect the American people against the worst consequences of war. It would be a winner morally, strategically, and politically. Reagan seized the idea. He did not, however, specify whether he actually wanted to build defenses or just talk about them. The SDI speech of March 23, 1983, yielded its political benefits immediately, and Reagan was content to let others decide what the speech would mean for defenses.

The SDI program was defined by a panel headed by James Fletcher, under whom the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) had become a bureaucratic dinosaur. The panel was a representative sample of the government's R&D establishment and its clients. By far the largest representation was from the Los Alamos, Sandia, and Livermore national labs. Virtually every one of the 52 members' parent organizations would have lost money had the U.S. decided to emphasize building rather than researching defenses. Wholly absent were those who had fought for missile defense since the 1950s or who had developed the technologies that had caused all the fuss.

Indeed, the panel's instructions, drafted by Keyworth, Robert MacFarlane, and Robert Cooper, made clear that it should disqualify by definition the technologies that had raised so much interest in defense. Why? You see, we should not design defenses to protect against the missiles that our enemies have or that intelligence tells us they are developing, but rather against the missiles that we can imagine they might build as a *response* to our defenses.

The "responsive threat" mandated an endless technological tail-chase. Actual liquid-fueled missiles, for example, fall apart after receiving the laser-energy equivalent of several lightbulbs per square centimeters per second—well within the capacity of lasers then under development. But the Fletcher panel assumed "responsive" missiles resistant to ten times the radiant energy on the surface of the sun. It also mandated "success rates" of 99.6 per cent. The meaning of such figures depended entirely on artificial assumptions about what kind of attack might be launched and how defenses might perform. Effectively, however, this was a moving standard of guaranteed perfection that no human artifact could meet.

The SDI program's founding document also mandated, among many other silly things, integrating information from every single defense weapon and sensor into a single computer program, with the capacity for manual over-ride at every point—leading some of the nation's best computer scientists to ask why anyone would want to do anything so counterproductive in every way.

Did Ronald Reagan himself have anything to do with this? Yes. In October 1984, he signed a secret National Security Directive (#192). It says that "Our technical community met my guidance and has designed our SDI research program to conform to a more restrictive view of our treaty obligations. This has entailed some price with respect to the speed of our program, the overall cost of the program, and the level of technical uncertainty we face at each step of our research." Nothing forced the Reagan Administration to fudge the SDI program. It thought best to do so.

The Reagan Administration continued to claim it was doing its best to protect American society. But this was false. In 1986, 1987, and 1988, a group of congressmen led by Malcolm Wallop and Jack Kemp proposed amendments to reserve some small portion of the SDI budget to actually build some anti-missile equipment. Each year, the Reagan Administration worked with the Left to defeat these amendments. One day Senator Wallop closed a long, sad phone call with the President by asking him why. "It's the Chiefs [of Staff]," answered Reagan. "I just can't substitute my judgment for theirs." He might also have mentioned his State Department. In sum, the bureaucrats acted like bureaucrats, and the President did not act like a President. Recall that when JFK decided to put an American on the moon, he forced the bureaucracy's hand. Had he ordered a Reagan-style approach, the Eagle would have still been on the ground ten years later, and ten years after that.

The Bush Administration regarded anti-missile defense as a legacy of its

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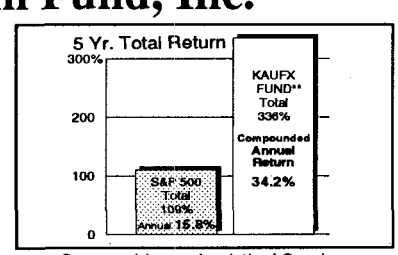

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Neanderthal predecessors. Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney chose as his undersecretary none other than Victor Reis, the man the Carterites had judged too anti-defense. No surprise, then, that even after the Gulf War had made Congress into a supporter of missile defense, the Bush Administration lobbied to water down the Missile Defense Act of 1991, which legislated a small, expandable anti-missile defense by 1996. And after the Act was passed, the Cheney Pentagon informed the Congress that technical and managerial difficulties would prevent the deployment of even a single interceptor rocket at the mothballed ABM site of Grand Forks, North Dakota, until the next century.

The Clinton Administration can do no harm by killing SDI. Rather, it can lay to rest a question—are you for or against SDI?—that has befogged the real choice. During a recent panel on National Public Radio I asked whether Representative Ron Dellums, the left-Democrat chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, would be willing to send American troops to any place where they might be attacked by ballistic missiles without equipment to shoot down such missiles. "No," answered Bob Brower, the congressman's representative, "we are strong supporters of theater anti-missile defense." What if, I asked then, the dictator against whom we sent our troops had the capacity to lob a missile onto the congressman's district. Would the congressman favor or oppose giving his constituents the very same protection afforded to our troops in the field? "Mr. Dellums," Brower replied, "does not favor an astrodome SDI approach." But is Ron Dellums in favor of giving his constituents the best defenses available today? His representative said, "Yes."

SDI was foredoomed to waste money, time, and the American people's trust because it was designed to avoid the only choice anyone ever has about anything: Do we do the best that we can today with what we have got, or not? All too soon we will be threatened by ballistic missiles, whether Russian, Chinese, Iranian, or other. If God grants us a year or so to react, our country will not lack the technologies for self-defense. It will have another priceless asset as well: the SDI program as a lively example of what not to do. □

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THE VICE PRESIDENT

WASHINGTON

April 19, 1993

Dear Rusty,

As hard as it is to believe, my first 100 days are almost up! To be totally honest, my report card has got to be pretty much like the ones I got at St. Alban's and Harvard—straight A's! But I've got to tell you, it's a lot like that Grateful Dead song that Tipper and I enjoy so much: it's been a very eventful journey.

The Summit was one of the most emotional and moving moments of my life. Two ancient enemies, brought together at the table—the environmentalists and the timber industry—while Bill and I facilitated an exchange of views. To be honest, Rusty, when it was time to go and we all shook hands, I got a little choked up. You know how emotional I get.

From there to Vancouver—another summit of sorts, between Yeltsin and Bill and me. Not much to report.

Back home, I got busy on my new challenge: the National Performance Review Board. This is an HRC brainstorm where I get six months to overhaul the entire Federal Government. Everything but the National Health Care System, which HRC says should be up and running by December. That and Defense. And farm subsidies.

But everything else is fair game. And boy, am I going at it. HRC helped out by suggesting at a press conference that we have an "800" number—kind of an electronic suggestion box. But the minute she gave out the number, the calls came in so fast that they overloaded the system. Boy, did I have egg on my face.

But to be truthful, it wasn't our fault. The outdated Bush–Reagan phone system can only handle a couple of thousand calls at one time. Bill and I have often discussed updating the technology at the White House. Did you know that when we arrived, we discovered the Bush Administration had been using computers almost eight years old?! Talk about archaic. And don't quote me on this, but I think using that outdated equipment really hindered the past two Presidents. I joked to Bill that our Administration is going to need i486DX processors just to keep up with all our new regulations. And when we have that technology superhighway in place, we can beam new laws and regulations instantly across the country, more efficiently than ever before. It's a brave new world, Rusty. Especially for the public sector.

My first act for the National Performance Review Board, or "Al's Board," as HRC calls it, was to convene an electronic video meeting of Department of Agriculture workers. Did I get an earful!

You can't imagine how many instances of waste and inefficiency I heard about. At the Department of Agriculture, of all places! While listening to these complaints, I hit on a brainstorm: Why not use part of the money appropriated by our economic stimulus bill to hire thousands of workers to help us ferret out inefficiency and waste in government? I made a mental note to develop this idea further.

The only problem is, the stimulus package is being stalled in the Senate by a Republican filibuster—led by Bob Dole, who reminds me of my father, which brings up a lot of unresolved inner-child feelings in me—and so it looked like my plan wasn't going to get a chance to be tried. So that night, after the Department of Agriculture meeting, I talked to Tipper.

I waited until we were both in our pajamas and ready for bed. Tipper has a way of demanding action suddenly. I've learned over the years to ask her things late at night, when she's tired. Once, back in 1987, I mentioned over breakfast that I was thinking about running for President. Well, by the time I got to the office, she had arranged a press conference and had booked six rooms in the Sioux City Best Western. When I told this story to Bill, he kind of laughed and said, "You too?" And then he told me a funny story about reading the paper right after the Gulf War—which I supported, totally supported, except for the friendly-fire stuff—and thinking you'd have to be a fool to run against Bush. All of a sudden, a shoe came flying across the room and hit him in the face. "I must have been thinking aloud," he said.

So that evening I said goodnight to the kids, put in a few hours on my new book (tentatively titled On Earth, We're All Homeboys), and climbed into bed.

"I need to hire a couple of thousand federal workers, Tip," I said, "but Bob Dole won't let me."

But Tipper didn't stir. I couldn't wake her up. She's been sleeping so soundly since HRC's been away.

A few days later, when HRC and I had a meeting, I mentioned my plan to her. "H.," I said, "if we can somehow link the Republican filibuster to my plan to hire thousands of 'efficiency police' to ferret out waste in the Federal Government, then I think we've got a real chance at getting our stimulus package passed."

She thought for a minute. I could tell that my words had impressed her. I could see her brain working overtime, trying to grasp my brilliant strategy.

"Al," she said after a long moment, "how would you like to go to Poland? I hear they're celebrating something there."

Guess who's going to Poland? This job just gets better and better! Here's to the next 100 days.

Write back, Al

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by Perillo

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Conservatism and the Future

KENNETH MINOGUE

THE ESSENCE of conservatism is conveyed by the story of the Irishman who, asked for directions, replied: "If I wanted to go there, I wouldn't start from here." Liberals think they know where they're going, but they don't know where they've come from. As every conservative knows, the past is reality. It tells us what we really are.

This is why conservatives disdain grand theory. It leaves out what makes us what we are. Liberals see people as bones animated by abstractions such as rights, welfare, justice, advantage and disadvantage, utility, needs, etc. You can plan a society for abstractions, but real people won't fit into it.

Today, however, conservatism is out of fashion. The triumphant Reagan–Thatcher double act of the 1980s has given way to muddle in Britain and Democrats in America.

Worst of all: conservative ideas seem to have vanished like yesterday's dream. Can it only be yesterday that political scientists could write, as Kenneth Hoover and Raymond Plant did in 1989, "The agenda for both the Right and the Left is set by the terms of free-market doctrines that have displaced Keynesian and socialist conceptions in the discourse of modern political economy"? Four years later, the talk in Europe is all of "industrial strategies," and President Clinton is masterfully taking charge of the American economy. Economic and political nostrums are clearly as volatile as women's skirt lengths.

The Anatomy of Thatcherism, by Shirley Robin Letwin (Transaction, 377 pp., $32.95)

In these dire times, conservatives must return to their base in the world of ideas, and some recent responses to the fall of Margaret Thatcher are a promising start.

In his book *Modern Conservatism*, David Willets, for example, anchors conservatism in a balancing act between community and markets. Against the socialist and the liberal with their passion for replacing markets by administration, the conservative affirms the value of choice. Against libertarians, the conservative insists on a strong moral and legal framework protecting families and established institutions. Willets thus counterattacks the critics who think it a contradiction to support both economic freedom and moral restraint.

Such critics include Hoover and Plant, who argue in their *Conservative Capitalism in Britain and the United States: A Critical Appraisal*, "Conservative capitalism is a hybrid of two tendencies: the one oriented to the market-place and *laissez-faire*, and the other to institutions that constrain personal freedom in the name of order." This is an interesting confusion, because buying and selling is a central element of personal freedom, and such freedom cannot be enjoyed without a framework of legal order. Nor will legal frameworks work without a moral order, and that is why the family is so important. Indeed, some conservatives (myself among them) think that a free society needs not only law and morality, but also good manners. And nothing in this package constrains freedom.

Stephen Moros

Freedom under law is impossible except for a civil population firmly guided by appropriate moral beliefs. This point is more than just a bit of conservative dogma—it is the secret of modern life, so much envied by those in the Third World. Who can best teach these people the secret of freedom? All that liberals know is the *principle* of freedom itself, which seems to mean that anything goes. That way lies anarchy and corruption, and the end of the road is despotism. It is by no means a paradox to say that real freedom rests upon self-discipline, and this is the basic virtue which only stable families seem able to provide.

Marriage, for example, is an institution commonly supported by conservatives because it is an act of moral seriousness. The fact that the more casual cohabitations of contemporary life commonly fail to generate self-reliance in their children is recognized by conservatives as probably the most alarming problem of our time.

So it is a false paradox to charge conservatives with inconsistency when they insist on linking personal freedom with the moral order. The great enemy of this false paradox was Margaret Thatcher, whose dominance of British politics throughout the Eighties awoke Britain from its postwar slumbers. She was attacked as libertarian and "authoritarian" at the same time, and those who hated her could only explain her policies in terms of selfishness. One established philosopher indeed, Ted Honderich, was so enraged by this complex position that he attempted to identify the entire conservative tradition with nothing else but the human vice of selfishness. He was not alone.

Is it vice, however, to link rewards to how people perform? Has not the collapse of Communism taught a useful lesson about the fate of economies

Mr. Minogue teaches government at the London School of Economics.

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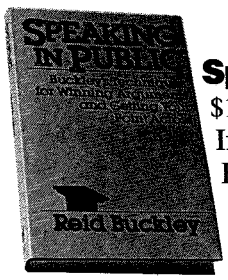

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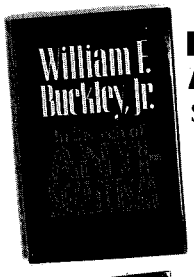

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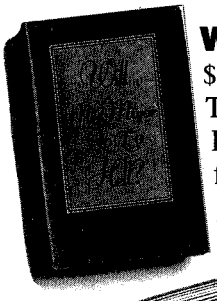

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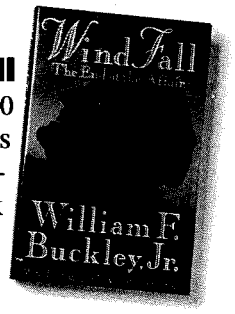

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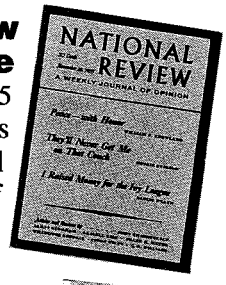

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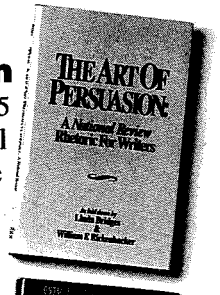

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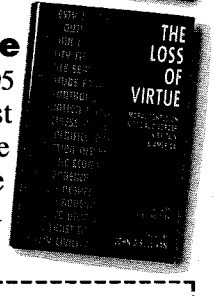

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detached from incentives? Indeed, is it selfish to work for the things one wants for oneself and others? It would only be selfish if modern production were a zero-sum game, in which what I achieved meant that much less for you. Such a view is contradicted by the history of modern economic growth.

Margaret Thatcher gave her name an "-ism." But what *was* Thatcherism? The question is important because it may help to explain why conservatism triumphed in the Eighties and has fallen on evil days in the Nineties.

Shirley Letwin's *The Anatomy of Thatcherism* presents a solution to this problem. It is distinguished from virtually every other book on current politics by its philosophical sophistication. It is this which allows Mrs. Letwin to explain how Thatcherism (and conservatism in general) can be coherent without being theoretical.

The lives of most of us as individuals, she observes, are coherent without being in any way the expression of an abstract principle. We all have commitments, and manage them so that one commitment does not clash with another. As we mature, we develop habits, convictions, and ways of satisfying our desires which fit together, tolerably well, within a framework of law, morals, and manners. Throughout our lives, we adjust to new inclinations and changing circumstances.

Conservatives are individualists in this sense. Most of them hate demonstrations and regard carrying banners as rather vulgar. Having projects of their own, they hate being conscripted into some grand collective project as has currently captured the fancy of politicians—putting the economy right, building socialism, and so on. But not everyone in a modern society has this sense; many hardly know what to do with freedom. The modern world is inescapably a mixture of these two tendencies, but its real vitality comes from those for whom life is an adventure to be pursued on their own terms. These are the people who badly need conservatism. Without it, they are endlessly taxed, harassed, and harangued. They will certainly resist the idea that democratic politics means getting government to remove all the evils that afflict us.

Thatcherism recognizes that the most desirable features of a vigorous society are not in the gift of government. Government cannot make countries prosperous, though it can certainly make them poorer; nor can it create virtue and integrity in its citizens, though it can certainly generate corruption. For the most part, governments can only (in Bosanquet's phrase) "hinder the hindrances" to virtue; the first principle of government must be its recognition of its own limitations.

This is not to say that a government must lack a vision of the kind of society it prefers, and Mrs. Letwin argues that Thatcherism has such a vision. It is concerned to restore "the vigorous virtues" to a Britain that had fallen into decadence. These vigorous virtues are traits such as uprightness, self-reliance, energy, adventurousness, and so on. They are to be contrasted with the "softer" virtues such as kindness, humility, gentleness, sympathy, and compassion.

These are all virtues, but virtues must be applied appropriately. Kindness sometimes debilitates, and adventurousness is sometimes merely rash. Thatcherism as Shirley Letwin sees it is the judgment that the vigorous virtues had fallen into disrepair in Britain, and that what the country needed was a government which paid no heed to the high-pitched whine from interest groups trying to shake cash out of the taxpayer.

Mrs. Letwin's account of Thatcherism is notable for its refusal to elevate this robust and practical form of politics to any kind of universal theory. There may well be other circumstances in which it will be appropriate to take a quite different moral line, one in which the harshness of some of the vigorous virtues will need to be softened. Thatcherism was a response to the discontents of Britain in the late twentieth century, and lessons can be drawn from it only with caution.

But in one area, Mrs. Letwin does strike an unmistakably wider note. It is when she gives an account of English individualism as involving a special kind of reason quite different from liberal conceptions of it as the great harmonizer. She denies that

> a government is an armory from which thunderbolts issue forth to repress evil, or a forum where advocates of competing interests do what they can for their clients, or a dispenser of gratuities and benefits. Instead, a government is regarded here as a council of the whole community that has been given the right by its subjects to decide what conditions need to be maintained in order to preserve a congenial form of communal life.

This conservatism stands out against the prevalent economism which makes a government, absurdly, responsible for our prosperity. What basically matters is the vigor of a free society; let the GNP look after itself.

These are materials for the necessary revitalization of conservative ideas in the 1990s. One weeps to think of how sorely they will be needed, and how soon. □

Let's Multilogue!

BRUCE FROHNEN

A FEW years ago the social scientist Amitai Etzioni and a number of like-minded colleagues began reminding Americans that our individual rights must be interpreted in conjunction with our duties to the community. These new "communitarians" note that we have come to think of rights as things we possess only *in opposition to* our communities. American "rugged individualism" had degenerated into the insistence upon our individual right to do as we wish—regardless of the effect on anyone else. The result is that the families, churches, and local associations in which we learn to treat one another decently are ignored and undermined in the name of each individual's "right" to create his own lifestyle.

The Spirit of Community: Rights, Responsibilities, and the Communitarian Agenda, by Amitai Etzioni (Crown, 323 pp., $22)

At the heart of the communitarian agenda set forth in this book is a renewed commitment to family and neighborhood. Mr. Etzioni castigates

Mr. Frohnen is the author of Virtue and the Promise of Conservatism: The Legacy of Burke and Tocqueville *(Kansas).*

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the ACLU for preventing police from setting up checkpoints in troubled neighborhoods to keep out drug dealers. He also calls for a return to community policing—cops on the beat—and for the use of neighborhood-watch groups. These programs would help fight crime by encouraging cooperation between citizens and police. More important, they would teach Americans to care for and serve their communities.

Mr. Etzioni rightly argues that divorce, crime, and the general moral sickness of our society stem (at least in part) from our refusal to recognize that our rights carry with them responsibilities. In short he recognizes that the rejection of moral standards undermines our morality. That is an important truth, familiar to conservatives. So it is surprising that Mr. Etzioni does not recognize, indeed he explicitly rejects, any conservative role in repairing the moral order. He repeatedly refers to conservatives as "McCarthy-types," "puritans," and "authoritarians."

More fundamentally, the communitarian project itself is explicitly anti-conservative. Mr. Etzioni's goal is to create "a new moral, social, and public order based on restored communities." Agreed, America's moral problems render the restoration of community imperative. But the attempt to create a *new* moral order assumes 1) that the traditional moral order should be rejected as fundamentally unsound, and 2) that we, or at least those of us who are communitarians, have the right and the capacity to create morality out of whole cloth and impose it on the rest of society.

Mr. Etzioni repeatedly identifies America's traditional moral order with the 1950s and then rejects it as "rather authoritarian" and "unfair," to women in particular. Americans in the 1950s managed to stay married, stay off drugs, stay out of jail. But, as Mr. Etzioni sees it, this cannot justify a decade that allowed sexual and racial inequality, and moral and religious "authoritarianism."

Despite his call for community and a common-sense approach to individual rights, Mr. Etzioni seems to see his real opponents not as the radical individuals who he says undermined the traditional order, but rather as those, conservatives in particular, who defend traditional morality, especially on the grounds of religious truth.

Tradition is "unfair" and religion is "intolerant." Thus Mr. Etzioni rejects the two necessary bases of any moral order. Philosophers, statesmen, and common folk have all recognized, through the ages, that we must look outside ourselves to nature and to God if we are to discover the rules by which we must live. Societies differ on many specifics of religious worship and proper conduct. But, by whatever name they are called in a given society, the religious precepts embodied in such Biblical texts as the Ten Commandments and the Golden Rule constitute the bases of civilization. Civilization is impossible without such rules, and without the fundamental character-forming institutions of family, worship, and local association they promote.

Differences in doctrine and social arrangements are not, however, unim-

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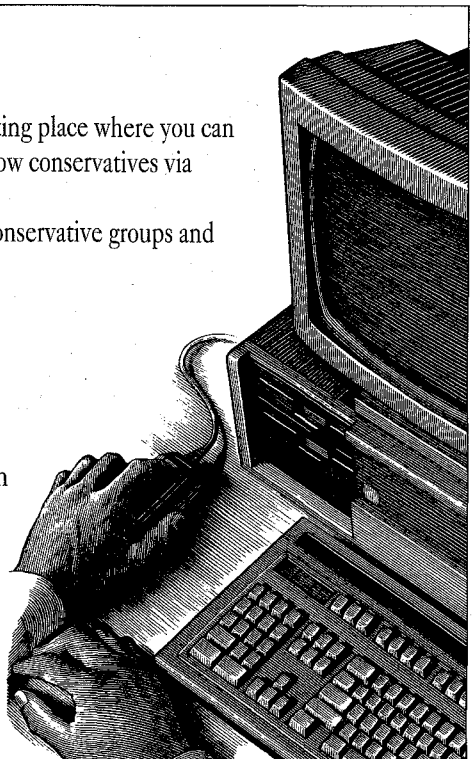

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portant. They reflect each people's attempt to maintain moral order in its particular circumstances. Tradition is a rich source of moral knowledge precisely because it constitutes a storehouse of institutions, beliefs, and practices that have stood the test of time. Mr. Etzioni denies, however, that either religion or tradition contains any transcendent moral truth. But what is left? On what basis are we to restore our communities?

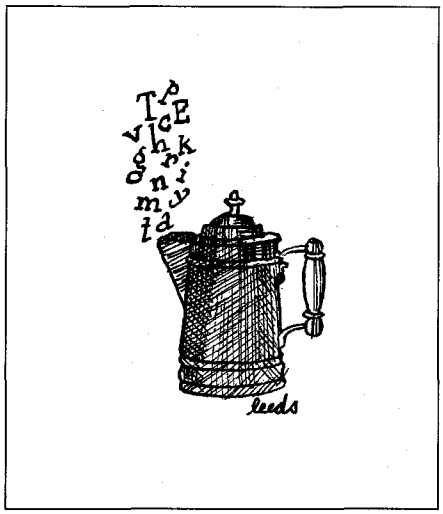
Mr. Etzioni himself has trouble with this question. Rejecting tradition, he nonetheless argues that we possess a moral consensus upon which to build a just society. We all "know" that we should take care of our children, value diverse "lifestyles," and sort our garbage. How we know these things is not explained. Indeed, at times Mr. Etzioni reverts to a half-hearted traditionalism, praising Western civilization for spawning democracy, while criticizing its failure to provide sufficient equality.

He says we are held together by our "democratic values." Thus moral rules themselves ought to be worked out democratically. We must decide what is moral through a "multilogue"—through discussion at work, at home, and through the media, which Mr. Etzioni confuses with an open public square. (He seriously cites *Larry King Live* as an important locus of the "multilogue," allowing citizens to call in and shape our morality.)

But we must take care to listen to the right public opinion. We must learn our morals from such voices as Ralph Nader, Betty Friedan, Norman Lear's People for the American Way, and Common Cause. We definitely must *not* listen to "interest groups" such as business organizations, the NRA, or, of course, the Moral Majority. In short, Mr. Etzioni's multilogue is univocally liberal.

Clearly, his goal is to re-educate us. Communitarianism began at a "1960s-style teach-in." And the methods of the teach-in, of sensitivity training, of role-playing games intended to "raise our consciousness" on issues from cultural diversity to "date rape" and "sexual harassment," are at the center of Mr. Etzioni's program.

Despots Mr. Etzioni would criticize, from Stalin to the swaggering academic minions of Political Correctness, have championed these methods at least since the French Revolution. But



Mr. Etzioni assures readers that *his* movement will be warm and inclusive. Coercion—at least *physical* coercion—is to be forsworn. Even religion will have a role to play. After all, worship services help us "bond" with one another, and clerics can facilitate the multilogue by helping us get in touch with our feelings. And, as Mr. Etzioni puts it, "community facilitators may be a modern necessity."

Mr. Etzioni wants to be your facilitator. He is unambiguous on that point, although he is reluctant to admit the enormous power "facilitators" would wield in a society bereft of tradition and belief.

There is something unsettling about the self-promotion in this book. The opening chapters contain self-satisfied recitations of polls and news reports on the growth of the communitarian "movement." The dustjacket displays a picture of Mr. Etzioni sitting beside Vice President Gore at the founding teach-in of communitarianism. Mr. Etzioni even provides a toll-free number so that we may subscribe to his communitarian magazine or leave messages of support.

With this book, Mr. Etzioni hopes to found a popular, as opposed to merely academic, social movement—one akin, in many ways, to two earlier movements: feminism and consumerism. All three, in their various ways, seek to convince us that what we *desire* is what is right. To flatter men's appetites and baser instincts in that way is very "democratic." But one may wonder whether such "democracy" is the best route to the restoration of a truly moral order. □

The Gay Science

JAMES GARDNER

THE LOVE that durst not speak its name has suddenly turned loquacious. Not only has the Gay Liberation movement become more vociferous in stating its grievances and proclaiming its preferences, it has also developed into a by no means negligible cranny of the world of cultural criticism. A recent visit to the corner bookstore yielded such treasures as *High Risk: An Anthology of Forbidden Writings*; *Inside Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*; *Brother to Brother: New Writings by Black Gay Men*; *How Do I Look: Queer Film and Video*; and *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety*. The tone of the books ranges from militant to flamboyant to soberly practical, but usually implicit in them is the entirely fictional notion that the vice squad is at the door, ready to suppress by forcible means this as well as any other instances of non-conformity. Forbidden writing indeed!

Not the least province of this growing empire is homosexual criticism of the arts. Unlike earlier criticism by homosexuals, in which private lives did not need to be projected onto public judgments, this new development gives us criticism refracted through the prism of the author's sexual preference. Conspicuous among writings of this sort is *The Queen's Throat*, which examines that great and eternal mystery of cultural life: why so many homosexual males seem to go in for opera and, by extension, musical theater in general.

The Queen's Throat: Opera, Homosexuality, and the Mystery of Desire, by Wayne Koestenbaum (Poseidon, 271 pp., $22)

The style and spirit of the book are campy in the extreme. Writing of

Mr. Gardner is writing a book about contemporary art, to be published this fall by Birch Lane.

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Maria Callas, whom Providence itself seems to have invented for the delectation of homosexual opera lovers, Mr. Koestenbaum hyperventilates thus: "I worship her because she made mistakes, and because she seemed to value expressiveness over loveliness. We don't believe in nature any more, but Callas put forth the effect of nature as opposed to the appearance of order, and offered an acceptable, digestible anarchy, a set of sounds on the verge of chaos—but enjoyably so. Here lay the danger, the lure: she was a mess *and* she was a goddess."

Who is the opera queen? Mr. Koestenbaum is vague on this issue, at one point intimating that one needn't be gay or even male to merit the honor. When I was a student, I occasionally sat in the side boxes of the dizzy topmost tier of the Metropolitan Opera House in New York and the Royal Opera House in London. It intrigued me that certain people seemed to exist simultaneously in both places, eternally, irremovably. They appeared to be mostly middle-aged men, neither well dressed nor especially genteel, in contradistinction to what I suppose we must call the ballet queen. For they were not wealthy, and most of their surplus capital went to buying these cheap tickets night after night during the season. Before the opera began and during the intermissions, they would make catty comments about the singers, and then, during the actual performance, they would start their mass exodus. For they had not come to hear the whole opera, but rather to hear one act, or one aria in one act, or one note in one aria, and then to be on their way again.

In describing such characters, Mr. Koestenbaum's book, in its exuberance, makes for a good read. A professor of English at Yale, he writes well, and given the workmanlike plodding of most contemporary prose, we must honor anyone with the courage these days to weave a purple patch. And yet this is not a good book. The question it poses is far more interesting than the author seems to realize, and so one is dissatisfied when he does not answer it in any organized way. Instead his book comprises hundreds of snippets, as though his desultory attention could not be sustained for more than a page at a time. But although Koestenbaum has collected these frag-

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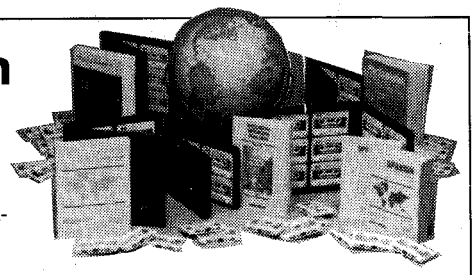

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ments into chapters, they can, like the pages of a Gertrude Stein novel, be read in any order you like.

Koestenbaum wanders from meditations on recording to the physical LP disk itself ("I've always been fascinated by the spindle hole") to the anatomy of the throat (a bodily part of equal concern to homosexuals and singers) to anecdotes about Nellie Melba, Adelina Patti, and Joan Sutherland, and about fans who have risked death in their devotion to the diva of their choice.

In another sense, however, this book is about the author. But it isn't so much about opera seen through the prism of his temperament, as it is about his using opera as the peg for his more than a little narcissistic self-contemplation. There is a reckless irresponsibility to his dealing with every subject other than himself. The near-spasticity of his free-associative style is suggested by this passage, concerning Strauss's *Capriccio*: "The heroine is the Countess, whose first name is Madeleine. 'Madeleine, Madeleine!' she says to herself in the mirror. The name brings to mind Proust's *madeleine*, and a Proust-derived homoerotics of tasting and connoisseurship." Because the heroine's name is the same as that of a small French confection savored by Proust, who was bisexual, Strauss's opera, ostensibly about a rather ordinary heterosexual love interest, is revealed to be about homosexuality, and thence it is but a short step to its being about Koestenbaum himself.

At other times, the scholarship that this professor of English serves up is startlingly misinformed. Quoting Walter Pater's well-known utterance that all art "constantly aspires to the condition of music," Koestenbaum asks, "Did Pater mean that all art aspires to be sung, that all art 'aspires'—exhales, moves like breath through the body? And why did he use the word condition? A 'condition' implies a malady, a state (like homosexuality or hysteria) . . ." But if Koestenbaum had bothered to read in its entirety the essay from which this was taken—"The School of Giorgione"—he would understand that it concerned the ascendancy of form over content, which nineteenth-century aestheticians like Walter Pater believed only music to possess.

Finally, Koestenbaum is given to statements which, because they are manifestly untrue, may, it is hoped, be passed off as paradoxical epigrams: "Listmaking is a prophylaxis against loss." "Opera has always suited those who have failed at love." "'I love Callas's voice' is another way of saying 'Callas's voice loves me.'" Well, no.

As one of the first in a growing number of works on the "homoerotics of tasting and connoisseurship," Mr. Koestenbaum's not unenjoyable book does not bode well. Truly to appreciate culture, one must approach it with humility—not by turning it into a mirror reflecting oneself and one's own preoccupations, but by trying to understand it as it really is in itself. This outmoded ambition has lately been assailed from many different angles of misreading: by feminism, Marxism, fundamentalism, even, sometimes, plain old conservatism. Now homosexualism enters the lists to demonstrate again how not to read a text. This is a shame, because there have been many critics who were homosexual and who have served with distinction. But the new spectacle of the homosexual critic, as opposed to the critic who is homosexual, is far less inspiring. □

FILM

A Hole in the Soul

JOHN SIMON

REMEMBER the bad old days when Charles Bronson, in *Death Wish* (1974), took matters into his own private citizen's hands and eliminated the urban vermin that tried to prey on him? Despite some squawking by liberals, he was considered a hero. In less than twenty years, we have become enlightened. As Michael Douglas, another private citizen, gives the scum what-for in ***Falling Down***, he is considered a nut case even by the filmmakers, let alone the Korean and Hispanic protestors demonstrating outside megalopolitan movie houses. The line between justicer and just plain crazy has been categorically crossed. Or has it? The movie waffles breathtakingly.

A solid citizen looking like the model junior executive, Douglas, with three pens neatly clipped into his white shirt's pocket, is understandably incensed by an endless traffic jam caused by repair work on a Los Angeles thoroughfare. Hot and exasperated by all that honking, cursing, and a pesky fly, he leaves his car on the road. Jacketless, he grabs his Samsonite briefcase, and declares to the stalled souls around him, "I'm going home." But where is home for this man whose license plate reads D-FENS? Bill (his name is barely mentioned) is headed for his daughter's birthday party. But his ex-wife, Beth (Barbara Hershey), living with their daughter in bohemian Venice, has a restraining order forbidding Bill, who can get violent, to visit. And three weeks ago he was fired from his job. Still, as he moves through the city on foot now, he keeps calling Beth from sundry pay phones, announcing his impending, intensely unsolicited visit. Perhaps he thinks that offensiveness is the best D-FENS.

Unpleasant things happen to our voyager. He walks into a Korean market, and is about to be charged 85 cents for a Coke, which he deems outrageous. When the cocky store owner refuses to settle for 50 and tries to pull a baseball bat on him, Bill snatches the bat, smashes part of the store, takes the Coke, and punctiliously deposits a dollar in the cash register, from which he removes two quarters by way of change.

Further on, he discovers a hole in his sole (soul?), and sits down on a rock to stuff newspaper into his shoe. Two vicious-looking members of a Hispanic youth gang accost him, tell him he is encroaching on their territory, and demand his briefcase as tribute. He refuses; they pull a switchblade on him; he wrests it from them, roughs them up, and routs them. Promptly they join their girlfriends in a parked car, chase after Bill, shoot up an entire sidewalk full of people, but miraculously miss *him*. Their careering car collides with another; one attacker dies, the other lies stunned on the

Mr. Simon, NR*'s film critic, is also theater critic for* New York *magazine.*

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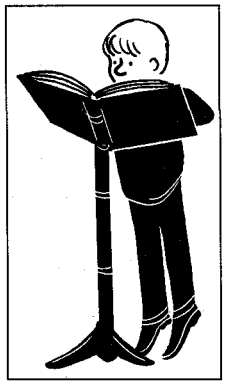
pavement. Bill picks up his dropped automatic rifle, shoots him in the ankle, stuffs the weapon in a gym bag he appropriates, and leaves with a sardonic comment. He is good at such Parthian shots.

The next showdown is at an eatery where, being three minutes late, Bill is refused breakfast: they are now serving lunch. Another outburst occurs when the Whamburger, radiant on a wall color transparency, is to the sorry thing served him like Hyperion to a satyr. Not unjustly enraged, he proceeds to terrify staff and clientele with his gun. Clearly—or muddily—Bill is both crazy as a loon and sober as a judge, because the screenwriter, Ebbe Roe Smith, and the director, Joel Schumacher, cannot quite make up their minds.

Meanwhile, the film has been cross-cutting to Prendergast (Robert Duvall), an honest cop, who is emptying his desk at the police station. Today he begins his early retirement, taken at the insistence of his spacy wife (Tuesday Weld, looking more like late Saturday), who has picked some wilderness retreat for them to resettle in. Though portrayed as a hopeless hysteric, she is loved and indulged by her husband. Their only daughter, who died long ago at age two, is still adored by them, and Prendergast removes her picture from his office desk as he prepares to leave for good.

I won't go into how and why Prendergast gets to go after Bill, while his wife keeps nagging on the phone, his captain keeps patronizing and insulting him, his fellow cops tell him to go home (like Bill, get it?) and leave the case to them, though they are on the wrong scent. Some parallel between Bill and Prendergast is plainly intended: both have wife trouble, a dead or withheld daughter, a lost or resigned job, and more besides. But the parallel is ultimately unresonant. Or else too pat, like the escalation in Bill's weaponry: baseball bat, knife, gun—all the way to a bazooka taken from a truly mad neo-Nazi army-surplus storekeeper, whom Bill shoots dead in self-defense. The gun-crazed lunatic (Frederic Forrest) had previously provoked and humiliated two homosexual customers, and deserves everything he gets.

This is kitchen-sink drama, though not in the usual sense of sweaty proletarians yelling at one another in the kitchen, but in that of having everything, including the kitchen sink, tossed into it. It is both politically incorrect (not very nice members of minorities) and correct (very nice Hispanic policewoman, very nice black man discriminated against by a white bank, very nice black child corrupted by white television), and veers wildly between drama and comedy, unable, as noted, to decide what to make of its hero. It's a crazy world, the filmmakers seem to be saying, and don't look to us to decide who is saner, or guiltier, than the next fellow.



Ambiguity and ambivalence are very valid devices, but we don't want to go swimming in them. Even about the exact nature of Prendergast's relationship with that policewoman (Rachel Ticotin, and good) the film manages to remain vague. And even such a very minor character as Bill's mother is dipped into ambiguity like a strawberry into chocolate, and Lois Smith plays her sweetly—or is it dementedly? The very title, *Falling Down*, assumes diverse, none too clear, meanings.

It would be easy to write the thing off as a total loss, but that would be unfair. The urban blight in the movie is real enough, as are many sentiments evoked, especially as enacted by an unusually strong cast. Schumacher has learned a useful lesson from Godard's *A Married Woman*: he uses posters, murals, graffiti to create a powerfully contradictory atmosphere: here a crude but earnest fresco of Christ the Shepherd; there an enormous billboard with a busty bikinied belle; yonder, in huge block capitals, KILL, KILL, KILL—two more *kill*s and we'd have a line from *King Lear*. The able Andrzej Bartkowiak has shot the film with his trademark suggestive palette, and there are times when the social satire—unlike Bill or Prendergast—happily hits home.

■ Not much need be said about John Badham's ***Point of No Return***; if *Falling Down* exaggerates a valid point, this *Point* magnifies an invalid one monstrously. It is the American remake of Luc Besson's French thriller *La Femme Nikita*—a trashy but effective piece of goods—and is, in the way of such supererogatory Hollywood remakes of European movies, trashier and less effective.

The heroine, a juvenile gang member and cop-killer, is turned by some unnamed government agency into a kind of killer cop—an undercover agent specializing in high-level political assassination, who eventually falls in love and develops a moral conscience. She was embodied in the original by the remarkable Anne Parillaud, since co-opted by Hollywood and poorly used. Here, the part is played by Bridget Fonda, not quite so sexily and well, but not without genuine allure and appeal. The mature leading man, as so often these days, has to be imported, and is played with a lovely but unsuited Irish lilt by Gabriel Byrne; the other, more delicate leading man is played by the home-grown Dermot Mulroney, deplorable as usual. I was fascinated by one thing, though. Part of remodeling our murderous guttersnipe into a high-fashion lethal weapon consists of teaching her good manners and good English, and we see her being taught by superagent Anne Bancroft (!) not to say "between she and I." Yet, later on, we hear her announce: "I could care less!" Can we rest easy while such a key government agency is doing its important job halfway?

■ ***Born Yesterday*** is the kind of remake you wish they wouldn't perpetrate for other reasons. The story of a ruthless junk tycoon bribing his way to greater riches in Washington, his dumb-blonde ex-chorine mistress, and the journalist hired by the tycoon to make her couth, this Garson Kanin play became a superb film vehicle for Judy Holliday, Broderick Crawford, and William Holden to strut their wares in, and how they strutted them! None of the remake's principals has anything approaching the rightness of the 1950 prototypes.

Take Billie Dawn, bored playmate of the millionaire Harry Brock, enjoying all the amenities of a well-kept kept woman, except love, respect, and a purpose in life. Melanie Griffith is better looking than was Judy Holliday, but she is beginning to show her age without being able to show the poten-

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tial of a soul, which Miss Holliday exuded. You don't believe she could ever get beyond page one of Tocqueville, whom the journalist Paul Verrall has her reading, or that material goods could not fill every cranny of her cramped consciousness.

In Douglas McGrath's updated scenario, Harry is playing for bigger stakes than Broderick Crawford was in the first version, but must John Goodman also be that much bigger around the waist? A scene in which this robber baron, now looking like a blubber baron, gets a massage, should turn all but the grossest stomachs. Douglas exuded a quiet manliness along with his primitiveness and amorality; Goodman is childishly petulant, more nasty than menacing. When he finally realizes that he loves Billie, he comes out pitiful rather than touching.

As for Paul, the *New Republic* political journalist profiling Harry and engaged by him to educate Billie so as to make her an asset in his Washington dealings, Don Johnson's performance hinges on a pair of eyeglasses meant to confer intellect. Not since Betty Grable went from office drudge to sex goddess by shedding her specs has so much acting devolved on a pair of spectacles. Johnson manages to remain casual throughout, but William Holden could suggest behind the relaxed exterior an inquiring mind in pursuit of truth and justice. Holden, now unjustly remembered only for *Hollywood Boulevard*, was in fact one of the few leading men able to convey lively inner life, no small feat in a medium that emphasizes action, the exterior life.

So the remake is reduced to depending on incidentals. It is a fair travelogue around D.C., stars a real-life married couple (Johnson and Griffith), and features another famous couple, Ben Bradlee and Sally Quinn, who are moreover genuine Washington figures. And the screenplay is by an authentic *New Republic* political writer, who, for the most part, has done a tolerable job.

But Luis Mandoki's film will be remembered only for one of those truly awful, shy-making scenes that movie fans collect in their memories or VCRs. At a dinner party, Billie tells the guests her aide-mémoire for the amendments to the Constitution, which turns out to be "The Twelve Days of Christmas." She leads them all in a community singalong that first stuns, then exhilarates them, in an endless scene that (unlike the rest) betokens an author who doesn't know his toke from his Tocqueville. □

DANCE

Into the Kingdom of the Shades

LINDA BRIDGES

RUDOLF NUREYEV waited thirty years after coming to the West to stage *La Bayadère*, and he almost waited too long. The Paris Opera Ballet gave its first performance of the new production on October 8, 1992; less than three months later Nureyev was dead.

When he first suggested staging it for the Royal Ballet in 1963, the Royal's director, Ninette de Valois, declined. She did allow him to do the "Kingdom of the Shades" scene, which became one of the jewels in his partnership with Margot Fonteyn). He restaged many other ballets in the interim (including the Petipa *Raymonda*, never before done in the West), but he was not, after all, first with *La Bayadère*. Nataliya Makarova, another product of the Kirov Ballet, weighed in with her own version for American Ballet Theatre in 1980.

The works created by Marius Petipa and his colleagues for the Imperial Ballet in St. Petersburg a hundred years ago tend toward either the supernatural (nutcrackers coming to life; girls turned into swans by an evil magician; a princess and her whole court put into a deep sleep until a prince should wake them) or the exotic (Byronic corsaires in the Mediterranean; a French count returning from the Crusades with tales of battling the Saracens). *La Bayadère* falls into the latter category, with its warriors, priests, and temple dancers in pre-British India.

The story is something of a cross between *Aïda* and "The Lady or the Tiger." Solor, a warrior, loves and is loved by Nikiya, a temple dancer (*bayadère*). However, the chief priest at the temple also loves, or at least wants, Nikiya; and the Rajah intends Solor to marry his daughter, the Princess Gamzatti. Although Solor has pledged himself to Nikiya (with the same gesture with which Siegfried pledges himself to Odette in *Swan Lake*) and is shocked by the proposed marriage, he doesn't reject it out of hand; the question whether he would have defied the prince and held to his pledge is mooted when the Rajah arranges to have Nikiya killed.

In the next act, Solor, brooding over Nikiya's death and his own future, smokes an opium pipe (this is India, after all), and the scene dissolves into his dream of the Kingdom of the Shades, in which he is temporarily reunited with Nikiya.

In Nureyev's version, the ballet ends there, as it did at the Kirov in his day; Miss Makarova recreated the final scene, in which Solor, Gamzatti, the Rajah, and Nikiya's shade dance together, and then, Solor having chosen to go through with the wedding, the wrathful gods destroy the temple and the company assembled in it.

There is something to be said for each version—restoring the last act resolves the dramatic conflict; omitting it ends on the stronger choreographic note. More of that in a minute, but first the Paris Opera Ballet's performance of it, which East Coast audiences had a chance to see during the company's brief visit to the Kennedy Center last month. In the cast I saw, Isabelle Guérin was a splendid Nikiya. Like Odette in *Swan Lake*, the role combines classical footwork with sinuous movements of the upper body—in this case, positions of the head and arms based on Indian art. Miss Guérin blends the two superbly, and her dance at the betrothal party should soften the hardest-hearted Rajah.

She has a worthy Solor in Laurent Hilaire, an imperious warrior and an ardent, even if not totally faithful, lover. But the dancer is trustworthy even if the character is not, a matter of some importance in a ballet that starts with Nikiya running across the stage and hurling herself into the air headfirst toward Solor, who catches her at waist height; and that goes on to various overhead lifts. Hilaire

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doesn't have the panache of the young Nureyev in, for example, the *coupés jetés en tournant*; but his turns and leaps are clean and exciting.

Gamzatti is a far less grateful role than Nikiya, but Elisabeth Platel handled beautifully both jealous rage and a difficult turn (sort of an inside-out *fouetté*, which Anna Kisselgoff in the *New York Times* glosses as an *attitude enveloppée en dedans*).

Finally, there is the corps de ballet. While the corps has a lot to do in any Petipa ballet, the Kingdom of the Shades gives it special standing here. This scene begins with a girl coming out of the wings onto a ramp at the rear of the stage and raising her left leg high in an arabesque, which she holds for several beats. She then walks forward four steps as another girl steps onto the ramp behind her; they both perform the same sequence, are followed by a third girl, and so on, until 24 (or, in the opulent czarist original, 32) girls have come out of the wings, proceeded down the ramp, and wound around the stage. If this is done sloppily—with the girls starting and finishing the arabesques as if they were taking instruction not from the ballet master but from Henry David Thoreau, telling each to follow a different drummer; or if the ones who have been on stage the longest start to wobble by the time everyone is assembled—the scene becomes really quite tedious. If it is done as well as it was by the Paris (which, come to think of it, was known for its ballet school even during the days—before Nureyev took over its direction in 1983—when the company had fallen into ill repute), the beauty builds and builds.

But what about the decision to end with this scene? I can't help wondering what solution Nureyev might have found had this project not been postponed until he was weakened by illness, since making the dramatic and the technical aspects of a work reinforce each other was always his forte.

What he typically did in his restaging was to bring these nineteenth-century ballets, not into the twentieth century, but in tune with the literary sensibility of the nineteenth century. When these ballets were first created, dramatic unity was less important than giving everyone in the company something to do (hence the innumerable "national dances," such as the mazurka, czardas, and Neapolitan dance in *Swan Lake*; the variations for the fairies in *The Sleeping Beauty*; and the dances for the "Negro children," the Golden Idol, and the girl with the water jar in *La Bayadère*), and providing an opportunity for upper-crust St. Petersburgers to make assignations with the girls in the corps or (in the case of *very* upper-crusters) with the

ballerinas (the rising star Mathilde Kschessinska, later a noted Nikiya, was the mistress of the young Nikolai Romanov, later Czar Nicholas II). Dramatic continuity was often left to fend for itself.

Furthermore, the leading male dancers were divided into *danseurs nobles* and *danseurs caractères*, a distinction that persisted long after the imperial court had closed up shop and the ballet company had been renamed the Kirov, after the man whose assassination gave Stalin his excuse to begin the Purges. The *danseur noble* partnered the ballerina; the *danseur caractère* did the glittery stuff. Actually, even the partnering was sometimes shared: in Act II of *Swan Lake*, for example, the Prince's friend Benno shared in the scene with Odette—rather as if Romeo gave Benvolio half his lines in the balcony scene.

Nureyev was scarcely the first to alter some of these arrangements, but he was, having burst on the Western scene so dramatically, the most widely noticed. When he was criticized once as selfishly aggrandizing his role, he replied, "A *pas de deux* is a conversation of love. How can you have a conversation if one partner is dumb?" Thus in *La Bayadère*, both in the scene at court and in the Kingdom of the Shades, Solor has as big a solo as Nikiya—just as in *Swan Lake* Nureyev added the brooding solo between the scene where Siegfried's mother tells him he must choose a bride and his first encounter with Odette; and he added a can-you-top-

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this? element to the Black Swan *pas de deux*.

Unchivalrous, those of the Anton Dolin school would say. One might counter: No, merely giving the princess a prince worth having. □

ANIMAL MANNERS

Creature Teachers

MATTHEW SCULLY

THERE's a wrenching documentary that turns up on public TV now and then about Greenpeace and its mission to save the whales. Whatever you think of Greenpeace, only the hard of heart could observe this footage and not be moved. Seeing these people in their little boat, darting between whaler and whale, you can't help admiring them and rooting for the whale to get away—which, though, he doesn't.

Once I was watching this watery drama with some fellow conservatives who have the annoying habit of exchanging despairing looks every time the subject of my "animal friends" comes up. "Okay," said one—launching into the usual *reductio* interrogation—"if whales have rights, what about minnows? Or sea horses? And what about the rights of the shrimp community. When will their cry for justice be heard?" My stirring appeal on behalf of the whale would have received a fairer hearing from the men of the *Pequod*.

Having endured many such browbeatings, I must concede that my non-animal friends have a point. To speak of "animal rights" is, in the end, as absurd as to speak of "animal duties." Probably the most rational view of animals and their place in the world is that of C. S. Lewis in his essay "Pain and Animal Suffering." Man, he says, "must be understood only in his relation to God. The beasts are to be understood only in their relation to man and, through man, to God. . . . [E]verything a man does to an animal is either a lawful exercise, or a sacrilegious abuse, of an authority by divine right." Fluffy sitting there minding his own business may not have the "right" not to be whacked with a paper. But we have a responsibility to wield the paper justly.

The Lewis formulation, moreover, supports the intuition that animals have some role to play on earth beyond their respective positions in the food chain. Maybe "role" isn't the right word. From a certain angle their glory consists of being "extras" in the whole human drama—as useless as Fluffy to the practical affairs of the household, yet somehow nice to have around. The sheer multitude of animals, their astounding variety, their strangeness, even their entertainment value all reflect something very comforting: a divine disregard of practicality. The mystery is not whether animals were made with rights, but that they were made at all. Judged by utilitarian standards, they are not here *for* anything. They're just here.

And even if their lot is not quite the peaceable kingdom, most of them seem pretty happy about being here. Their dumb contentedness with each day and its haul—nuts, leaves, a salmon, or some other equivalent of their daily bread—is one of the more appealing animal qualities.

That and their vulnerability. Reflecting on his farming life, Whittaker Chambers observed that no one appreciates the life of an animal like the man whose job it is to raise and kill it. The reason being that he understands himself to be exercising power, and with it a trust.

A similar idea comes across at the end of *The Deerhunter*, when Robert De Niro has just come back from Vietnam and sets out with his old hunting buddies into the woods. While his idiot friends are back swilling beer and shooting from the car, De Niro, the true hunter, is on the trail of a majestic buck. Finally he has it caught in his sights, and through his scope we see the creature looking straight at him, scared but serene. And at the last moment, De Niro fires into the air, shouting something like "Just this once . . ." The idea is not that he has suddenly converted to the animal-rights cause, but that he now sees that

Mr. Scully is a former NR *associate literary editor and a former speechwriter for Vice President Quayle.*

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in a vicious world perhaps even a prize buck deserves an occasional break.

I'm afraid I actually know people who cannot appreciate the sight of an animal except on the table, above the mantel, or around the shoulders. One pities them, not because there is any grave moral issue at stake, but for the same reason you pity the clod who tramples over a bed of flowers for a shortcut or just for the willful enjoyment of it. They're missing out on that experience of wonder at the "fearful symmetry" of nature, as Blake described it. And, too, there's a doltish arrogance in that spirit. If not even a sparrow falls without His knowing, we're not too important to notice it ourselves.

About the worst disservice we can do our fellow creatures is to drag them into our ideological schemes of power, "rights," and "victimization." If animals perform any service to us, it's precisely to draw our minds away from those distracting shadows. There really is something to be said for hitting the trails now and then (though come to think of it I have never actually done so) to study the lower creatures in search of higher things. A young woman I know put it simply when, as we were walking through a park, she pointed to a squirrel and asked idly, "What makes it go?" Animals—both friendly and frightening—are like wordless messengers racing and roaring and singing around us to keep that question before us. If that, in the grand design, is their mission, it's a noble one.

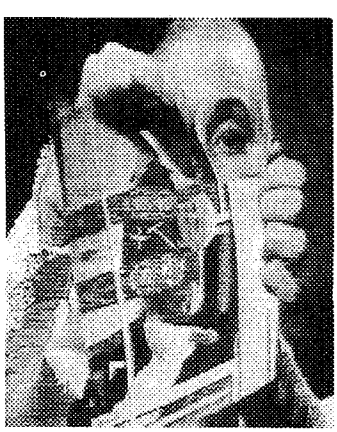
Nor is it even all that relevant to debate animal intelligence, intriguing though this is. The question is explored in a recent *Time* cover story entitled "Do Animals Think?" And the answer seems to be—yes, at least more than we supposed. We read, for instance, of dolphins who are instructed by hand signals to execute tricks of their own devising. They dive below, squeak in private for a moment, and then emerge to perform exactly the same stunt simultaneously. It seems to be an act of creative collaboration.

Similar gifts are displayed by chimps—such as the renowned "Washoe," who responds to English by pointing to symbols, each representing a word. And then there's Alex, a parrot, who according to *Time* can form his own sentences (drawing from a vocabulary of a hundred or so words), identify colors, shapes, and materials, and even apologize when he answers incorrectly.

A cracker for Alex. This really is impressive. But, actually, it just confirms the observation of any pet owner or Sea World visitor that some critters are mighty smart. I have seen a friend's cocker spaniel dash upstairs every morning for a week with no further prodding than the words, "Max, go wake Matthew up!"—Max's only reward being the anguish this routine seemed to cause.

In fact this same Max displayed something very like altruism, rou-

(Continues on page 61)



Sinead O'Connor, Pop Music Star,
Saturday Night Live, 1992.

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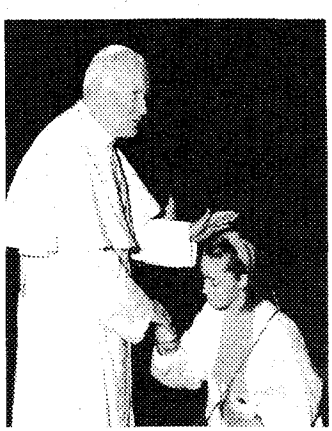

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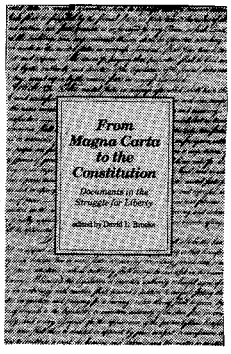

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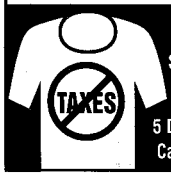

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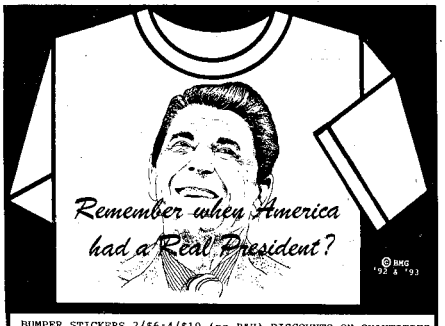

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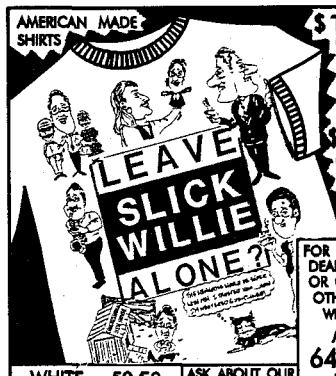

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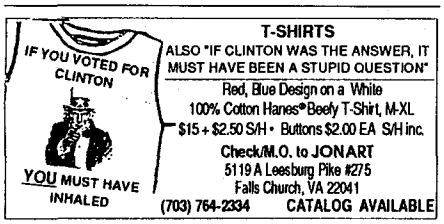
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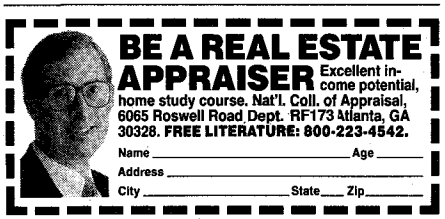
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SCULLY

(Continued from page 57)

tinely stepping aside to let his mate, Muffin, have first run at the food bowl. His portly bride would scoff furiously on their communal meal, all but disappearing into the dish as her exemplary beau stood by waiting for the proper moment.

Such traits, more than intelligence, are the animals' strongest claim on our kindness. One thinks for instance of the AP story a few years back about a dolphin that came to the rescue of a ten-year-old boy swept away in the tide near San Francisco Bay. For about two hours, as the boy described it, the dolphin circled him fending off the sharks.

Or I think of my own dog, his little mission on earth long completed. He was not an intellectual dog, but only the most ferociously loyal creature God ever put breath into. As he got older he seemed to gain a sense of his own dignity, like a battle-tested old elephant. The usual tricks were beneath him, and any he could be cajoled into he performed with the sad, half-hearted look of a Ringling Brothers bear.

Once, when he was 15 and I was 16, as a casual experiment in canine behavior I aimed some mint breath spray into his mouth as he was innocently sitting there panting. The result of my experiment: Subject responded unfavorably to stimulus. Until that moment my inseparable friend, he would have nothing to do with me for a full week, even to the point of leaving—slowly and deliberately—any room I entered. It wasn't like the loss of temper a dog seems to understand and forgive. Worse than a violation of his "rights," I had insulted him; a pact had been violated. This lesson learned, my week in the cold was declared over one morning with a wake-up lick.

Then there is this Disneyesque, but true, story about Lucky. In his twilight months, he and I would sleep on a mattress downstairs, on account of his arthritis which made the trip upstairs daunting. At this point he couldn't even take walks, just stiff little steps in the snow around the back porch.

One night I said or did something despicable that brought on one of those horrible family fight scenes—everybody shouting and crying as I was ordered upstairs in disgrace. A few minutes later, sitting there in my room in a state of turmoil, I heard the familiar claw sounds as he reached the top landing, and looked around just as a brown and white muzzle poked through the door. If you ask me what in this case "made it go," I would not discount the possibility of empathy. If the old fellow was merely scared by all the commotion, why didn't he just find a quiet corner downstairs?

From such stories, after all, do we get our dog clichés; they really are loyal, and not always animated by self-interest. Likewise, the cunning and curious cat, the provident squirrel, the longsuffering horse, the artful, workaholic beaver, the trusting lamb, the eager-to-please dolphin, the gentle whale—metaphors inspired by ages of observation. Looking at the whole strange assortment, we can view them all as cartoon-like beings, or as so much livestock awaiting our use or consumption. Either way, it seems to me, we miss out on one of life's easier opportunities to observe beauty.

What makes it go? is, in fact, not a bad summary of Psalm 104: "How manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches. So is the great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts. There go the ships; there is that Leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein." □

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The Other Dr. King

NEW YORK, APRIL 5

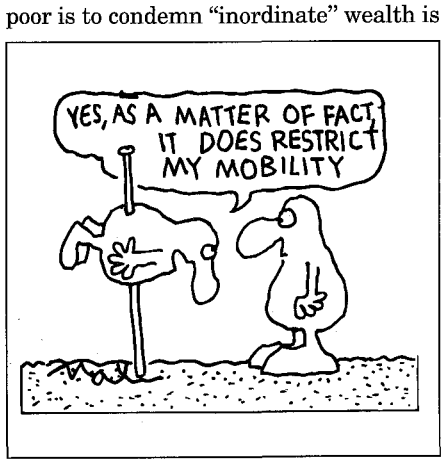
The 25th anniversary of the death of Martin Luther King brought on a chorus from admirers who are by no means content to celebrate him merely as a civil-rights leader. Typical of these is Julian Bond, who was briefly prominent in the movement and teaches now at American University and at the University of Virginia. Mr. Bond lays it on the line, and the line is that Dr. King stood for much more than merely civil rights, and that an opportunistic America celebrates his memory for that and just that because we are anxious to continue to practice our "extralegal racism" that "still cripples and crushes."

It is not wise for champions of Dr. King to remind us about the whole Dr. King. To begin with, a portrait of Martin Luther King, warts and all—as Oliver Cromwell instructed his portraitist to proceed—would have us redigesting his loose morals when pursuing his graduate studies and when engaging in what nowadays would go by the name of sexual harassment, to take one view of it; in concubinage, to take another.

Julian Bond, however, doesn't touch on King's personal life, as they like to put it. (Was it Zoë Baird's "personal life" that she cheated on taxes for her nanny?) Here is how he says it: "Today we do not honor the critic of capitalism, or the pacifist who declared all wars evil, or the man of God who argued that a nation that chose guns over butter would starve its people and kill itself. We do not honor the man who linked apartheid in South Africa and Alabama; we honor an antiseptic hero." That is absolutely correct, and if it were less than correct, there would be a movement to bump Dr. King out of our calendar of national heroes deserving a full holiday.

"They"—the American public—"do not know that until his life's end he fought for economic justice . . . or that he had challenged America's right to make war in Vietnam." What Mr. Bond is referring to is that, having with the 1964 and 1965 laws accomplished his formal agenda, Dr. King, ever hungry for more causes to champion, decided that the Vietnam War was unjust. The alleged injustice of that war mobilized the politically correct of the era, who capitalized on the disinclination of many young college men like Bill Clinton to take a part in the war effort, and who opportunized on the détente Lyndon Johnson was cultivating with Moscow, and on the subsequent dissolution of Executive power under the burden of Watergate, to immobilize the national purpose. Dr. King did not live to see the Boat People or the genocide in Cambodia. One wonders whether Dr. King, moralist, would have stressed the virtues of pacifism against the Khmer Rouge.

Julian Bond reminds us that in 1966 King told his Atlanta congregation, "There must be a better distribution of wealth. . . . We can't have a system where some of the people live in superfluous, inordinate wealth while others live in abject, deadening poverty." That is close to being correct, but its incompleteness is critical. We cannot have a society in which people are *condemned* to live in abject, deadening poverty. Our society is so far from being one that freezes men and women in poverty that the 90 per cent who were poor in the year 1900 are reduced to 13 per cent who are poor in 1992. That there are poor among us no more condemns the structure of this society than that there are among us those who die of cancer or tuberculosis, even as there are others who are positively groaning in health. The notion that the means to lighten the load of the poor is to condemn "inordinate" wealth is kindergarten socialism, and America is not in the mood to celebrate that part of Dr. King who was an economic naïf.



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Many Americans who objected strenuously to positions taken by Dr. King—for instance his failure to rebuke the black Congolese who butchered the white missionaries in 1964—agreed to suspend their reservations in order to celebrate King the Civil-Rights Leader. Julian Bond should take the hint. The day after Dr. King was killed, Mr. Bond told a huge assembly of students at Vanderbilt University that his death "proved" that America was not worth saving. I disagreed with him on that occasion, and still do. □

The Lakewood Primitives

NEW YORK, APRIL 7

It can't reasonably be doubted that the enthusiasm of many middle-class white Americans for abortion has to do with two psychological impulses, the first being to protect America from dysgenic black fertility, the second to control the fruit of the excesses of the young white population, concerning which there is a sense of resignation. As one mother from Lakewood, California, put it to a reporter from *Time*, "What can you do? It's a testosterone thing."

Well, testosterone has been around for a very long time, but what you can do has been done for millennia, and with relative success, which is to teach self-control, and to make felt the wrath not only of God, but of the dear boy's parents when the kid goes about boasting of biological powers shared with bulls and mongrel dogs. But in the age of the Playboy Philosophy that is not the mood at all, as we discovered a fortnight ago in Lakewood when eight boys were had up on felony counts that included sex with a ten-year-old girl. The lead boy in the so-called "Spur Posse" claimed that he had accumulated 66 points, representing sex with 66 different girls. His parents' reactions were on the order of being told that their son had scored 18 holes-in-one. "My parents were a little surprised. They thought it was more like 50." Most of the boys' parents, relieved when all but one of the boys were let out of the can, were entirely nonchalant on the moral point, as were the boys, needless to say. Reports Jill Smolowe of *Time*, "Son Billy, who was not among those arrested, . . . saw no cause for remorse. 'My dad used to brag to his friends. All the dads did.

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When we brought home girls they liked, they'd say, "Cool," and tell their buddies. It's all the moms that are freaking out about this stuff. But that's probably that Freudian thing. You know, penis envy.'" No, we don't know, and "that Freudian thing" is not the cause of the concern of those mothers in Lakewood who are appalled at the idea of a teenager having sex with 66 girls.

Yes, sure, there is a physical risk that goes with that kind of thing. The Alan Guttmacher Institute reports that 56 million Americans are infected with sexually transmitted diseases; 12 million new sexually transmitted infections occur each year; two-thirds of those infected are under 25 years old, and one-quarter are teenagers. "Just one act of unprotected intercourse with an infected partner," the *New York Times* advises, "and a woman has a 50 per cent likelihood of contracting gonorrhea." Back in Lakewood, the Planned Parenthood office reports that three thousand teenagers visited its clinic last year. "Of those, 547 tested positive for a sexually transmitted disease. Of the 949 girls given pregnancy tests, 385 tested positive." No doubt these girls, or most of them, headed for the nearest abortion clinic. That is a tough way to go for the unborn child, but then again, the big macho boy with the Spur Posse is unlikely to volunteer to adopt 66 kids.

The famous book entitled *The Other Victorians*, which talked about rampant underground pornography in the Victorian age—about satyriasis and nymphomania and flagellomania and algolagnia—had a fine old time telling us something most of us came to know early on, namely that every society has a sexual underground, because sex is a biological appetite that obsesses some men, and indeed some women—though, like other appetites, it can usually be controlled. Those who can't, or don't, control this appetite are to sex as alcoholism is to the gourmet: the human perspective is destroyed, and sex becomes as alluring as inhaling crack cocaine, or chugalugging a fifth of gin.

The more interesting point about the "other" Victorians is that there were—*other* Victorians, namely men and women who practiced, or tried to, sexual discipline, back in an age when the divorce rate was a small fraction of what it is today and when family cohesion and family values were matters of pride. The son of Victoria who became king was an "other" Victorian in the sense that Professor Steven Marcus wrote about, i.e., a man of uncontrollable (uncontrolled?) sexual appetites, and that king's great-great-grandchildren have footloose sexual habits which endanger the monarchy—if anybody cares—raising the question, What *do* the mothers and fathers of Lakewood care about? □

The King Is Dead

NEW YORK, APRIL 2

The Count of Motrico, who served as Francisco Franco's ambassador to the United States, was loyal to Franco, but, a refined scholar and hardy Castilian, he was also a monarchist, and the problem was this: The following Saturday, Franco was slated to deliver a speech on the question of the Spanish succession, and in 1956 it was thought most fearfully important by the advisors of Don Juan, unanointed King of Spain, that he should not be accessible to the media, which would press him to react to Franco's speech. It was a matter of ultimate importance to deal ever so delicately with the man in whose hands, as dictator, any question of a Spanish Restoration lay.

There was a practical problem. Don Juan was in New York City and wasn't scheduled to sail until repairs had been done on his schooner. What to do?

The telephone rang, and our intimate friend Motrico put it to me. Inasmuch as I was in regular touch with boatyards, could I and my wife put up the King and his crew, incognito, for the week it would take to put his boat in order? Motrico is somewhat dramatic. "What we will do," he explained, "is give a farewell cocktail party in New York. Then the King and crew will board their boat and wave at all their fans. But you will be hidden in the boat and instead of going straight down river heading for Bermuda, you will turn at the Battery, and take the *Saltillo* to Stamford, take the King and his crew [a British admiral/navigator, a count/lieutenant, one ensign, two aides] home, take his boat to your boatyard, get the repairs done—and as soon as it's over, the King can slip off to Bermuda and handle Franco when he's fully prepared."

I busied myself with my pilot charts and specified a departure from the 79th Street Marina on the Hudson River at 7 A.M., in order to catch the northerly tide up the East River. Seven A.M. was not the favorite hour of the Bourbon King, but he was brave about it; a little less than brave about it when at 11 A.M. we found ourselves moving past the United Nations Building at approximately zero miles per hour. The foul current there is almost five knots, and five knots was the motor speed of the *Saltillo*. I had exactly misread the charts, carefully catching the tide exactly when it turned sour.

Even so, the King handed me a gin and tonic, with one piece of ice—"our last." Why didn't he have an icemaker? I might have been Franco, asking him why he didn't want to be King. Icemaker? Yes, I said, remarking on an innovation in boatlife during the season. The count/lieutenant/bursar was instantly summoned: Put that on the list of things to be done to the *Saltillo*.

It proved a rollicking week. Don Juan fell instantly in love with my wife, ate and drank heartily, told stories late into the night, was frequently on the telephone to his advisors, using melodramatic code signals which, had any foreign listening devices been on the prowl, would have brought them buzzing in as to the poisoning of a Borgia. One morning, passing by his bedroom door, I heard, "But Krees-to-ffer, I haff alreddy read to you *Mutt and Jeff* two times!" My five-year-old son had appointed himself King's entertainer, bringing in his comic books early in the morning.

Every day I would bring news from the boatyard. The icemaker would require a major on-deck excision. . . . Go ahead! was the royal command. Don Juan reminisced about his festive ten days in Washington and in New York, where he had been given the keys to the cities in part because he was a live king, in part because he was thought of as the alternative to Franco, who, in those days, came in just after Stalin in the affections of the politically correct. "When I wass with the editors of the *New York Times* for lunch Mr. Sulzberger said to me, Yourr Highness, when your boat stopped at Puerto Rico, did you visit with Pablo Casals?" After Pablo Picasso, Pablo Casals was the most renowned Franco-despiser around; and the aspirant-king had always to be careful. "How did you handle that one?" He laughed uproariously, quaffing his wine. "I said: No, I did not see my old friend Pablo. You see, I love music, but Pablo, *he* loves *politics*, and I did not want to talk about politics!" The editors of the *New York Times* knew they were up with a pro.

Don Juan was much shaken when his son agreed in 1975 to serve as King of Spain: but after 18 months, he dutifully renounced the throne, the last barrier to the legitimacy of his son's tenure as King Juan Carlos. Don Juan reappeared several times in our lives. I was never again asked to serve as his pilot, but always I would pass along news of the development of good things at sea. □

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Nixon's Nemeses

FOR ALL its blessings, affluence carries a curse: the creation of entire classes of people who don't, as a technical matter, have any reason for being here. The golf pro, the anti-smoking activist, the gestalt therapist—each forgoes productive employment to surf on the lagniappe of an economy that creates more wealth than it can properly dispose of. Some of these people are harmless or amusing; some are pests and parasites. Some are professors of journalism.

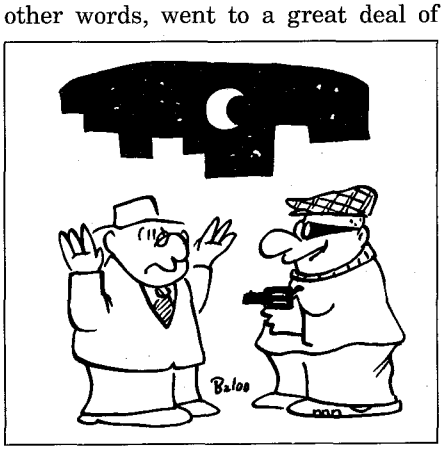
Cruising the quad, lost in labyrinthine and pointless thought, J-school profs lead a professional life of astounding implausibility. Their object of study is not the mystery of the material universe or the enduring ideas of a faraway epoch but the fishwrap and birdcage-liner of the day before yesterday. Yet this irrelevance seems only to expand their capacity for mischief. Eager youngsters seek them out for professional training, while the news industry showers them with subsidies, underwriting the production of pamphlets, studies, surveys, and monographs—all the grim paraphernalia that flatters newspaper editors into believing their daily grind really is worthy of scholarly attention, even if they have to pay for it themselves.

It is an incestuous marriage, this coupling of editors with the academics who study them. I came upon one of their offspring the other day, a study called *Ways with Words*, produced under the auspices of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, and presented at this year's ASNE convention. ASNE conventions are, by tradition, devoted exclusively and in equal measure to six topics: how to hire more blacks in the newsroom, more Latinos in the newsroom, more women in the newsroom, more Aleuts in the newsroom, more gays in the newsroom, and how to reverse the decline in newspaper readership by appealing to more blacks, Latinos, women, Aleuts, and gays.

Ways with Words is addressed to this last concern, though it downplays matters of race, sex, and tribal affiliation. Worries about declining readership have obsessed the newspaper industry since—well, since journalism professors were hired to study declining readership. Now a note of panic is creeping in. The study's authors conjure up a desperate premise: newspapers today are too darned smart for their own good. "Our journalism," they write, "seems to be just beyond the grasp of far too many Americans." The study thus suggests ways to dumb down newspaper writing, in hopes of finding the perfect coincidence between the stupidity of the people who consume newspapers and the cynicism of the people who produce them.

To aid in the effort, the authors enlisted the *St. Petersburg Times*, a paragon of the modern American newspaper. Staffed exclusively with J-school grads, the *Times* is graphically sumptuous, festooned with Pulitzers, and unreadable. The paper was used for this experiment: Each day, for four days, a news event was written up in four different styles; each story was placed in a different edition, and readers of each edition were then polled to discover their reactions.

The academics and newsfolk, in other words, went to a great deal of trouble, and you won't be surprised to learn that it wasn't worth it. *Ways with Words* reproduces the four versions of the four stories, and reading through them—I want to be candid—I fell asleep not once but twice. The stories had to do with subjects as various as suffering pets and shoreline development, and each version was uninteresting in its own way. I suspect the academics who assembled the study nodded off, too. They dutifully concocted some "statistically based path analysis" charts, to show "cause-and-effect relationships among factors," but this summation speaks, I think, for us all: "We learned there are no easy answers; neither are there alternatives to finding the tough ones."



"A senator, eh? Give me $5,000 and we'll call it even."

YOU CAN almost see the gentlemen (and women) of the ASNE pat their tummies and shout: "Hear, hear!" The newspaper industry has become a timid, inbred enterprise—notwithstanding its long-overdue outreach to the Aleut community—and *Ways with Words* proves the point. Asking journalism professors to help improve newspaper writing is like asking the arsonist to put out the fire. Newspapers, through grants and subsidies and closed hiring practices, created America's journalism schools; and now J-schools, through their graduates, have re-created America's newspapers. The result has been the steep decline in newspaper quality, which in turn has resulted in the decline in newspaper readership, which newspapers then hire journalism professors to study. Talk about cause-and-effect relationships among factors.

Still, the blame for America's unreadable newspapers must lie with the professional newsfolk, not the profs who feed off them. Several years ago, at an ASNE convention in Washington, I heard the harshest, and truest, assessment of the industry from an expert in the field—Richard Nixon. At one plenary session, Nixon delivered, without notes, a talk breathtaking in its knowledge and originality. The editors gave him a standing ovation. As he left the ballroom I told him I never thought I'd see a roomful of newspaper editors give anyone a standing ovation, much less Richard Nixon. Nixon looked over his shoulder at the crowd. "Yeah, well," he said, shrugging. "They're still a bunch of s---s."

—ANDREW FERGUSON

Mr. Ferguson is a writer living in Washington, D.C.

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